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Subject and object in intellection as a basis for a theory of self-intellection in ancient Greek thought.

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Subject and Object in Intellection
as a Basis for a Theory of
Self-Intellection
in Ancient Greek Thought

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Ph.D.
in the Department of Philosophy
at King's College London

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1995



Abstract

Can the intellect be its own object? Or is the intellect some anomalous entity about which nothing can be said? This dissertation is about ancient treatments of the problem of self-intellection. The manner in which ancient philosophers dealt with self-intellection took them into both the epistemological and metaphysical domains. For the subject matter reflects upon questions about identity, causality and coextensivity, all of which arise when the object of thought happens to be the thinking subject.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: The first chapter opens with an analysis of Parmenides' account of thinking and the relation it enjoys with its object, 'being'. Here, I suggest that Parmenides intentionally outlines an account of thinking which is paradoxical, given the strict identity relation which, according to him, the thinker and its object enjoy.

The second and third chapters examine Plato's epistemology. Chapter II argues that the final argument of Republic Book V should be interpreted as Plato's response to this Parmenidean paradox. For here Plato outlines how the epistemic subject and its object are coextensive *relata*, a relation which entails differentiation. With the epistemic subject and object clearly distinguished, the third chapter, on the Theaetetus, examines the nature of the epistemic subject *per se*. Taken together, these two chapters develop the subjective aspect of the intellectual activity required for one to be in a position to explain how the epistemic subject could have itself as an intellectual object.

The fourth chapter is an examination of how Aristotle copes with the intellectual process in De Anima, in particular the *aporia* of whether the intellect can be its own object. However, unlike Plato in the Theaetetus, Aristotle does offer us a coherent account of how the subject relates to intelligible objects, regardless of whether that object is the epistemic subject or not. Yet he does so at the expense of that epistemic subject, since his account is an object-oriented one in which the epistemic subject is subsumed by its object. Thus a problem has emerged: we either have an account of the

epistemic subject that eclipses its object, or an account of how that subject relates to its object but at the expense of the subject. However, if an account of self-intellection is to be tenable, an equilibrium between the two sides is necessary.

The final two chapters, five and six, centre around a paradox which Sextus Empiricus brings against the Stoics concerning whether the epistemic subject can have itself as an object. Chapter V begins with an analysis of the paradox and then goes on to look at related issues in Stoic epistemology. Ultimately, the positions the Stoics outline do not afford an adequate response to Sextus' paradox. The final chapter concentrates on Plotinus, whose account of self-intellection does contain an answer to Sextus' paradox. With Plotinus' resolution of the paradox, we finally have a coherent account of how the epistemic subject has itself as an object of intellection.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank M.M. McCabe, my supervisor, both for teaching me how to do ancient philosophy and for all her expert and patient guidance on this dissertation. I am also extremely grateful to Richard Sorabji for his invaluable comments on and criticism of the entire dissertation, as well as for having given me the opportunity to serve for four and a half years as his Research Assistant on the Ancient Commentators on Aristotle Project. Gerard O'Daly also gave me some very valuable advice on an earlier draft of the chapter on Plotinus, as did Tad Brennan on the chapters concerning Aristotle and the Stoics. In addition, I am indebted to Sylvia Berryman, Tim Crane, Lucy O'Brien, Gabe Segal, Stuart Leggatt, Mike McGuire and Rob Wisnovsky for their kind help. Most of all, I want to thank Marita Walmsley for her constant love and support, and for just putting up with me.

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Introduction

I The Scope of Self-Intellection

In his Principles of Philosophy, René Descartes defines thought in the following manner:

By the term ‘thought’, I understand everything which we are aware of as happening within us, in so far as we have awareness of it.¹

Every intellectual act for Descartes, therefore, involves the ego’s awareness of that act. Thus, when ‘I think’, I do so self-consciously. I know or am aware that ‘I think’ or ‘I will’.² One cannot entertain thoughts or think without some sort of immediate concomitant or contemporaneous awareness of that act.³ Self-consciousness or self-awareness in this sense is exactly what this dissertation *is not* about. I am interested in exploring the concept of self-intellection, by which I understand the epistemic subject⁴ having itself as a proper, call it first-order, object of intellection. The central thrust of this dissertation is to examine whether an adequate theory of this intellectual process can be discerned in the ancient Greek philosophical tradition. Given my stated aim, it is essential that such a formal analysis of the epistemic subject and its object which are to be the basis for a theory of self-intellection not be confused with, say, an analysis of the self-awareness that one has of oneself and the psychological or ethical issues which arise from such a self-awareness

¹ Descartes, Principles of Philosophy, 1.9 (AT. 7). The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, vol. I (in 3 vols.), trans. by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Similarly, in his replies to objections, Descartes has this to say about thought: ‘Thought. I use this term to include everything that is within us in such a way that we are immediately aware of it. Thus all the operations of the will, the intellect, the imagination and the senses are thoughts’. Descartes, Objections and Replies: Second Set, AT 160. The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, vol. II. The demarcation AT refers to page numbers according to the twelve volume edition of Descartes’ works as edited by Adam and Tannery.

² cf. Bernard Williams, Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978), p. 70 and Quassim Cassam, ‘Introduction’, Self-Knowledge: Oxford Readings in Philosophy, ed. Q. Cassam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 6.

³ cf. Christopher Gill, ‘Is there a concept of person in Greek philosophy’, Companions to Greek Thought, II: Psychology, ed. S. Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 169, 173.

⁴ To avoid any confusion, throughout the dissertation I shall refer to the subject as either the epistemic subject or simply the subject. The scope of either term is intended to cover all epistemological, cognitive and psychological acts.

or self-consciousness. Accordingly, this dissertation is explicitly not about such issues as whether and in what manner knowing oneself is a necessary or sufficient condition or both for being virtuous, or happy or performing intellectual acts.

Having ruled out the problems of the self which arise when taking the Cartesian approach to the epistemic subject and self-consciousness, I should also make it clear that this study is not about ‘personhood’ in the sense in which functionalists, such as Daniel Dennett, discuss the issue. In this dissertation, I shall not be examining or analysing the notion of ‘personhood’ or ‘persons’ from the functionalist point of view in which a ‘person’ is understood in terms of being an ‘intentional system’ (i.e. something which can be understood in terms of intentional states [hopes, fears, desires etc.]).⁵

Nor shall I be looking at ‘personhood’ in the manner of the action theorist, whose understanding of what it is to be a ‘person’ is centred around the idea that only a rational agent capable of pro-attitudes (i.e. beliefs/desires that something is/be the case) qualifies as a ‘person’.⁶ In other words, the behaviour of the entity in question can *legitimately* be analysed and framed within a practical syllogism.⁷ Legitimacy in this context entails that the ‘person’ actually have performed rational deliberation, i.e. syllogised, and it not simply be the case that the action could be described in syllogistic terms, despite the fact there was not any rational deliberation on the part of the agent.

My dissertation, at most, might incidentally overlap with some part of the ‘personhood’ domain, inasmuch as the concept of the epistemic subject, an entity which is capable of theoretical thought, and what it is to be a ‘person’ overlap. However, such an overlap will be entirely coincidental. Instead, my primary focus is upon whether and how an intellectual entity or the intellectual faculty can be its own object of intellection and what sort of theory would be required to support such an intellectual phenomenon. Moreover, it would be incorrect to infer that because I am looking at the intellect, by extension, I am looking at human beings exclusively, i.e. those things with which we usually equate ‘persons’. In ancient Greek thought, the class or set of intellectual things, especially when

⁵ cf. Daniel Dennett, ‘The Conditions for Personhood’, The Identities of Persons, ed. A.O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 179.

⁶ cf. Christopher Gill, ‘Is there a concept of person in Greek philosophy’, p. 184.

⁷ This view is sometimes referred to as ‘externalism’, cf. Q. Cassam, ‘Introduction’, pp. 16-17.

it comes to such thinkers as Aristotle and Plotinus, contains more than just humans. It also includes gods.⁸

Having stressed what this dissertation is not about, let me say something about the topic which the dissertation will be addressing and why I think it is important. Beginning with the topic itself, the domain to which self-intellection belongs is epistemology. Self-intellection is, first and foremost, an instance of intellection, thinking. It is an instance of thinking in which the epistemic subject, the thinker, has itself as an object of thought. This is very different, say, from what the physicist examines when he focuses upon objects and how they relate to one another or how one object might relate to itself. For the nature of that relation is not an intellectual one. Yet it does not follow from this claim about intellection that self-intellection is something which is exclusively and simply epistemological. For self-intellection might be about intellection and how that which thinks can have itself as an object of thought but, by the same token, it is also very much about relations and *relata*. And these issues originate from or belong to the domain of metaphysics. For self-intellection is a process or activity in which something as a subject *relates* to itself as an object. Thus self-intellection might originate in the epistemological domain but it is something which can only be apprehended if certain principles from the metaphysical arena are deployed or imported. This need to turn to metaphysics and make use of its principles is one reason why, *inter alia*, it is crucial to distinguish self-intellection from the Cartesian account of self-consciousness or self-awareness. With the latter, reflexive awareness is built into the subject, it is in part constitutive of what it is to be an 'I'; so one need never leave the epistemological or psychological domain from which one begins when trying to understand the nature of the reflexive apprehension of the self. Everything is all there in (i.e. built into) the epistemic subject. With self-intellection, on the other hand, the epistemic subject is conceptually much thinner or more austere than the Cartesian ego. Because of this austerity, metaphysics takes on a pivotal role in the explanation of how the intellectual subject gets a hold of itself as the object of its intellection. For the 'self' in self-intellection, unlike its

⁸ cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1177b33-1178a3. Also cf. Christopher Gill, 'Introduction', The Person and The Human Mind, ed. C. Gill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 14.

Cartesian counterpart, is not immediately reflexive. For the latter, the Cartesian ego, all thoughts are 'I' thoughts.

Before discussing how metaphysics underpins the structure of self-intellection, I want to come back to the other question just touched upon: Why is self-intellection even an issue? Why is self-intellection important? Most intelligent creatures assume or take it as a basic intuition that their own intellect is not an anomalous entity, an ineffable mystery. Rather, they regard their intellect as a piece of intellectual furniture that exists in the world like any other. That is, one's intellect can be thought and known. Offering an account of self-intellection is an attempt to satisfy this intuition which we have about our intellectual self, namely, that I am capable of thinking myself as an intellectual entity. This is different from the Cartesian claim that all my thoughts entail self-consciousness or are 'I' thoughts. The former is a claim which holds that among the infinite number of objects of thought which I believe I can entertain, I include myself *qua* thinker. I can have an intellectual relation to myself in which I, as an epistemic subject, can think myself as that thing which thinks. Thus, self-intellection is an epistemological theory which attempts to justify that basic intuition.

Metaphysics, strictly speaking, is about Being. It examines various things such as universals, material objects and minds from the point of view of ontology. It focuses upon the various ways in which these things can be said 'to be'. However, such a description is by no means exhaustive. For this science also examines how it is that these things relate to one another. It looks at the sorts of relations there are and what it is to be a *relatum*. Yet, despite the fact that relations and *relata*, strictly speaking, belong to the domain of metaphysics, it does not follow that they are unique to or the exclusive property of metaphysics. For such notions can and must be imported into other arenas of discourse, epistemology being an obvious example. For without such notions, epistemology would be incoherent and unintelligible. For the mind and its content or objects are *relata*.

Having said this, what are the sort of relations which one must import into the epistemological domain in order to account for intellection and self-intellection? There are four basic relations which arise in this domain. Firstly, there is the relation in which 'x' is a necessary condition for 'y'. Secondly there is the relation in which 'x' is a sufficient

condition for 'y'. Then there is the relation in which 'x' and 'y' are *both* necessary-and-sufficient conditions for one another, and, finally, the relation which expresses their identity. Now, 'x' and 'y' are simply logical place-holders. Properly expressed in the epistemological domain, they would be replaced with the epistemic subject and object. For intellection or thinking comprises thinkers and the things which those thinkers think, that is, epistemic subjects and their objects.

Now in order to understand properly the various ways in which the epistemic subject and its object relate to one another, they must be viewed within the overall context of relations. In other words, the epistemological forms of these relations should be examined alongside their metaphysical counterparts. Three of the four relations mentioned (identity being the exception) have both logical and causal applications. Beginning with the necessary condition, a simple logical instance of this relation would be the claim that being a man is a necessary logical condition for being a king. By definition, one cannot be a king, unless this condition is met. Causally, an instance of such a relation would be the claim that being in a dry state is a necessary causal condition for the match box being ignited. Match boxes only ignite when this condition is met. Now, when we come to the epistemological application of such a relation, it is of a causal nature. However, that does not mean it excludes the logical relation. Rather, if the causal relation is successful, i.e. if the event or activity occurs, then this relation will also entail that the logical relation holds. (This entailment will also apply to the sufficient causal relation.) Now an epistemological instance of this relation would be the claim that the epistemic subject can only think if intelligible objects act on that subject. That is, these objects must be present to the subject and act on his intellect, if that subject is to be able to think. They are a necessary condition for the occurrence of thinking. However, these objects are not a sufficient cause of thinking because thinking also requires something else. It requires that the epistemic subject be in the appropriate state for the affection to occur, something for which the objects themselves cannot account or provide.

The second relation, the sufficient condition, like the necessary, can be expressed in all three guises. Logically, being a king is a sufficient condition for being a man. Once it is known that 'x' is a king, by definition nothing else is required to demonstrate the claim that 'x' is a man. Knowing 'x' is a king is sufficient. A causal

instance of this relation would be that a prolonged absence of oxygen is a sufficient cause for a human death. Such an absence by itself will kill humans. The epistemological application of this relation, again, takes a causal form. An example of this relation is the following: thinking is sufficient to establish the existence of intellectual content or intelligible objects. For the act of thinking, it could be argued, stipulates that there be intellectual content, otherwise it, thinking, will be meaningless. In other words, it will not be thinking. So the idealist, for example, would claim that thinking is sufficient by itself to cause there to be intelligible objects. Nothing else is required to guarantee the existence of intelligible objects.

As for the third of these relations, necessary-and-sufficient, the logical application plays a crucial role in understanding intellection. So, for the sake of economy, I shall use one example to express both the logical and epistemological applications of this relation, for the epistemological application is an instance of the logical one. The epistemic subject and object enjoy this necessary-and-sufficient relation: one cannot have a subject without the presence of an object or an object without a subject. For, they -- by definition -- mutually entail one another. Thus, they can be said to be coextensive with one another. This relation is the most basic one, epistemologically speaking. For without it, any account of thinking, believing or any other mental act is doomed (including self-intellection).

When it comes to a causal instance of this necessary-and-sufficient relation things are not so clear, because causal relations are usually thought of as unidirectional. Thus, the example of the moon passing in between the sun and the earth might be the only cause of an eclipse, yet it does not enjoy the symmetry -- the mutual entailment -- of its logical counterpart. For although one might *infer* that an eclipse occurs when the moon is in between the earth and the sun, he would refrain from saying that the eclipse caused the moon to be in between the sun and the earth in the same way as he would the moon caused the eclipse.

The final of the four relations spoken of at the outset is identity, by which I intend strict identity. Now this relation does not have a causal application for an obvious reason: causality assumes or implies the non-identity of that which acts and that which is affected. However, identity has a logical application. It takes the form that 'x' is 'x'. In

other words, it is the trivial relation in which 'x' relates to itself by being identical -- being 'x' -- with itself. Under no description or under any circumstances can there be any differentiation. Now this form of strict identity is the most troublesome sort of relation when brought into the epistemological domain because it is potentially lethal to intellection, and by extension self-intellection. For despite the fact the subject and object logically entail one another in their coextensive relation, they both retain their own unique properties, i.e. what it is to be a subject and to be an object. And in terms of their causal relations, the object of thought might act upon the subject or the subject might cause the object but they remain distinct and discernible throughout the process. However, when the relation in question is one of strict identity, the subject and object are rendered indiscernible from one another, since such an identity claim entails that they have all the same properties in all possible situations and, as such, are indistinguishable from one another, numerically, qualitatively and definitionally. Yet intellection, be it of itself or something else, must, if it is to be intellection, retain the distinction between what it is to be an epistemic subject and object.

So why import identity into the epistemological domain in the first place? If this dissertation is to achieve its stated aim of tracing a theory of self-intellection, an account of how the epistemic subject is identical with its object -- itself -- will have to be set out. Coextensivity and causal relations in the epistemological arena are insufficient to explain this epistemological phenomenon. One might account for the subject and object distinction and the other dynamic aspects of the intellectual process with them but they do not fully explain how the subject can be its own object. But, as self-intellection is a relation in which epistemic subject thinks itself, some account of the identity relation between the subject and object will have to be given. However, to do so is somewhat perilous, because if an account of self-intellection gives too much ground to the identity relation between the subject and object, it cease to be intellection altogether. Instead, one is left with something rather trivial: The intellect is the intellect. And, as a result, the intellect will remain anomalous. Hence the task of this dissertation is to offer a theory of self-intellection which can somehow accommodate coextensivity, causal relations and identity. All are required.

II The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of two parts. The first part, 'The Emergence of the Problem', attempts to trace the problem which arises when one tries to explain how the epistemic subject can relate to itself as an object of intellection. The second section, 'The Problem and Its Resolution', focuses on some attempts to explain how one might offer an account of self-intellection in the face of this problem, i.e. how the epistemic subject can have itself as an object. However, ultimately, these considerations of self-intellection are vulnerable to what seems to be an intractable paradox, namely self-intellection is impossible because one is either a subject or object but not both. I shall refer to this as Sextus' paradox. Chapter VI then focuses on Plotinus' response to Sextus. In this chapter, I argue that Plotinus successfully answers Sextus, with the result that we are offered a coherent theory of self-intellection.

Given this general statement of the dissertation's structure, let me briefly sketch out the chapters themselves. In the first chapter, 'Parmenides Challenge', I argue that the Parmenidean account of thinking (τό νοεῖν) and being (τὸ εἶναι) is such that it destroys or undermines any sort of intellection. This is accomplished, I suggest, by Parmenides' deliberately outlining an account of thinking and being (Fr. 8) in which the epistemic subject and its object are identical. This is the only relation -- the identity relation between the subject and object -- Parmenides' position affords. As a result, the *relata* are reduced to the trivial relation of self-identity. One is left with the claim that the Parmenidean principle, τὸ εἶναι, is identical with itself. The epistemic subject and its object, *qua* subject and object, have ceased to be coextensive *relata*. Now it is this positing of the subject and object in a strict identity relation which I interpret to be Parmenides' challenge. It is a position which, if not met, rules out any sort of intellection, be it of the epistemic subject or otherwise.

Chapter II, 'Plato's Response', takes up this challenge. There I argue that the final argument of Republic Bk. V (476d8-480a13) could, and should, be read as Plato's response to Parmenides' strict identity thesis. It is a response which rejects the identity relation between the subject and object in favour of the coextensive relation, thus reinstating the subject and object as differentiated *relata*. This is the first step in any

account of intellection, since the intellectual process requires a discernible subject and object, including self-intellection. The manner in which I defend the claim that Plato is responding to Parmenides is first by drawing attention to several literary and philosophical allusions between the text of Parmenides and the relevant text of Republic Book V. Then, in order to substantiate my view further, I attempt to reconstruct a plausible account of what Plato's interpretation of Parmenides might have been, using two Platonic texts (Parmenides 132c9-11 and Sophist 244b6-e8). In the third part, I then give an interpretation of the final argument of Republic Book V and conclude with a brief account of exactly how this passage constitutes a proper response to Parmenides.

Having rescued the subject and object from the strong monism of Parmenides, the third chapter, 'Plato's Epistemic Subject', turns to the Theaetetus. This chapter takes the next step towards establishing a theory of self-intellection. It explores the structure of the epistemic subject *per se*; that is, what it is to be an epistemic subject. As already noted, coextensivity by itself cannot constitute a theory of self-intellection. If the subject is to have itself as an object of intellection much more is required to explain such a phenomenon. For before one is in a position to say how the intellect *qua* subject can be related to itself *qua* object, the structure and nature of the subject itself must come into focus. Thus I discuss the Theaetetus in detail, for it is here where Plato tells us what the epistemic subject is, i.e. what it is that is unique about being a epistemic subject. The only shortcoming with this text, as far as my enterprise is concerned, is that it falls flat when it comes to intelligible objects. For the Theaetetus ends in *aporia* when it comes to providing an account of intelligible objects. And without objects, a theory in which the epistemic subject has itself as an object of intellection is doomed for obvious reasons, i.e. there is no account of what it is to be object.

At this point I turn to Aristotle (Chapter IV, 'Aristotle on the Epistemic Subject's Relation to its Object in De Anima') and examine the manner in which he understands the epistemic subject to relate to its objects. I concentrate on De Anima not only because Aristotle gives us a very rich account of how it is that intelligible objects relate to the epistemic subject, but also because it is the natural successor to the Theaetetus. Both texts are interested in explaining how the various senses and their proper objects relate to the epistemic subject (Theaetetus 184b-187a and De Anima 3.1-2).

However, unlike Plato, Aristotle gives us a much richer object-oriented account in which the object causally acts upon the subject. The Aristotelian position makes much use of the causal relation. Intelligible objects are a necessary condition for intellection and so, by extension, self-intellection. For in virtue of being acted upon by its object, the subject thinks that object and in the process, according to Aristotle, becomes that object. Thus, on the Aristotelian account, by virtue of the causal relation between the object and the subject, we also derive an identity relation. The subject literally becomes the object and so is identical with it. And it is because of this, i.e. becoming its object, that self-intellection is possible. For the subject is capable of being an intelligible object. However, it is self-intellection at price, and that price is the loss of the subject. For the subject in the intellectual process is subsumed by its object, which is really itself, but opaquely so.

These four chapters taken together constitute the first part, 'The Emergence of the Problem'. The reason they do so is because the result of the development is such that we either end up with a subject which ceases to be able to relate to objects and thus cannot think itself as an object or we have a subject which gets subsumed by its objects with the result that it ceases to be a subject during the intellectual act. Hence the sort of self-intellection with which we are left is coincidental. By thinking, the epistemic subject coincidentally thinks itself.

The second section, 'The Problem and Its Resolution' (Chapters V & VI), opens with a paradox raised by Sextus Empiricus against the Stoics: If the intellect is to be its own object, then it will be a subject without an object or it will become the object and cease to be a subject. Either way the intellect ceases to remain both the subject and object; and yet it must so remain, if one is to have a coherent account of self-intellection. For if it does not have itself as an object then self-intellection is out of the question, whereas if it has become the object, then there is nothing to do the intelligising. The principle of identity either forces us to have a subject without an object or an object without a subject, thereby destroying coextensivity, causality and along with them self-intellection. The philosophical presuppositions which motivate the paradox are the materialistic ones of the Stoics. Thus, after the paradox is set out, I examine Stoic epistemology and concentrate on some of their attempts to come up with a balanced account of how the epistemic subject might have itself as an object of intellection without one side eclipsing the other. There, I

argue that the accounts of Hierocles and Epictetus do shed some light on this epistemological phenomenon. However, both attempts ultimately fall short of being able to answer Sextus' paradox.

Chapter VI, 'Plotinus' Response to Sextus' Paradox', picks up where Chapter V left off, with Sextus' paradox. In this chapter, I argue that Plotinus' account of the Intellect does constitute a proper response to Sextus' paradox, resulting in a coherent theory of self-intellection. Plotinus, I argue, manages to keep both sides of the self-intellection equation intact through his use of the notion of 'whole on whole' and 'transparency'. Ultimately these concepts, along with his use of Plato's μέγιστα γενή, afford Plotinus an account in which the epistemic subject has itself as non-opaque intelligible object. The relations of coextensivity, identity and causality are fused together in such a way -- what I call *epistemic identity* -- as to allow for a certain sort of transparent reciprocity between the epistemic subject and its object, itself. The result of the Plotinian account is a successful and coherent theory of self-intellection.

I

The Emergence of the Problem

I

Parmenides' Challenge: The Identity of the Epistemic Subject and its Object Fragments 1-8

In this first chapter, I shall explore the Parmenidean account (Fragments 1-8) of how the epistemic subject and its object relate to one another. The reason for taking Parmenides as my starting point is as follows: His account of the manner in which the epistemic subject and its object relate to one another is such that if it were allowed to stand, it would be lethal to any account of intellection, and by extension self-intellection. For his is an account which does away with the epistemological distinction of and, consequently, the relation between subject and object. On the Parmenidean account, we have a thesis that takes the subject and its object, the *relata*, to be identical with one another, and so indiscernible from one another. In effect, there is only one self-identical entity. The notion of *relata* within this context can only be applied in the most trivial sense, namely, the Parmenidean entity, τὸ ἓόν, is related to itself by virtue of being identical with itself. Thus, if a theory of self-intellection is to be a possibility, then Parmenides' position will have to be met and overturned. For if the only sort of relation tolerated is self-identity, then a coherent epistemology and the sort of relations which it entails will be prohibited.

The chapter itself is set up as follows: I shall begin by outlining the structure of the first half of the poem (Fragments 1-8), culminating with an account of Parmenides' (strong) monism. Then I shall explore how Parmenides' monistic principle stands in relation to the route which allowed him to reach that principle, emphasising the paradoxical implications which such an account entails for the epistemic subject, its object and the sorts of relations they might enjoy. Finally, I shall conclude this initial chapter with some remarks about the sort of identity envisaged by Parmenides.

I The Proem

The proem opens with Parmenides being taken up in a horse-drawn chariot for an audience with the goddess.¹ Upon his arrival, he is told that he must learn everything (χρέω δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι).² By πάντα the goddess intends two things, the ‘unmoved heart of well-rounded reality’ and the ‘opinions of mortals’:

ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμῆς ἦτορ
ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθείης.³

The scope of this dichotomy is the entire poem. The first part (Ἀληθείης ἀτρεμῆς ἦτορ) -- the part on which this chapter will focus -- is the section in which thinking and τὸ εὖν (the Parmenidean principle and object of thinking) are examined. The second part, the Way of Seeming, consists of Parmenides’ cosmological account of things. This part concentrates upon the opinions of mortals and so falls outside the scope of my study. Mortal opinions will only be relevant to the extent that Parmenides raises them within the context of the Way of Truth (Fr. 2-8) as a possible third option.

II Fragments 2-7

Taking an overview of these six fragments, Parmenides’ objective is to canvass all the possible routes of inquiry into the true nature of things (Ἀληθείης ἀτρεμῆς ἦτορ, Fr. 1.26), eliminating those which are unthinkable. This endeavour is premised upon two points which Parmenides takes to be self-evident. There is some sort of reality, i.e. that which ‘is’, and it can be thought, i.e. there is thinking. Thus his task in these fragments, especially the eighth, is to disclose the nature of this reality.

In the second fragment Parmenides outlines two routes in the form of a disjunction. The disjuncts are that which ‘is’ and that which ‘is not’. According to the

¹ Fr.1.1-21. The Parmenides text is based upon H. Diels and W. Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, 16th edition (Berlin: Weidmann, 1972), unless specified otherwise (hereafter referred to as D-K).

² Fr.1.26-8.

³ Fr. 1.29-30. Trans: ‘... both of the unshaken heart of well-rounded reality and of the opinions of mortals, which comprise of no genuine conviction.’ Most manuscripts give εὐπειθέος in place of εὐκυκλέος. I follow the D-K reading which is based upon Simplicius. For the εὐπειθέος reading, see D. Gallop, Parmenides of Elea (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 52. Translations of Parmenides are loosely based upon David Gallop’s translation, unless specified otherwise.

goddess, they, ἔστι and οὐκ ἔστι, are the only two conceivable routes:

αἵπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι·
ἢ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,
Πειθοῦς ἔστι κέλευθος ('Αληθείῃ γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ),
ἢ δ' ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς χρεῶν ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,
τὴν δὴ τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπὸν·
οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἔδν (οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν)
οὔτε φράσαις.⁴

Thus the disjunction is intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, given that the two disjuncts are contradictories,⁵ they are also mutually exclusive. Accordingly, the two sides of the disjunction cannot both hold, yet one of the two must hold.⁶ It cannot be the case, given that the disjunction is exhaustive, that neither holds. Of course, the choice of disjunct will have to be decided on metaphysical, not formal, grounds.

Having glossed the first disjunct as that which 'is', along with the impossibility for it not to be,⁷ Parmenides turns his attention to eliminating the second disjunct, οὐκ ἔστι.⁸ He dismisses this disjunct on the grounds that it, οὐκ ἔστι, can neither be recognised or known (γνοίης) nor shown or pointed out (φράσαις).⁹ It has no

⁴ Fr.2.2-8. Trans: '... which are the only routes of inquiry for thinking. The one, that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be, is the journey of Persuasion, for it (i.e. Persuasion) attends on reality, the other, that it is not and must not be, this indeed I tell you is a path entirely without report; for you can neither know that which is not, for that is not possible, nor point it out.'

⁵ Although the disjuncts need not be taken as contradictories (i.e. $\sim\Diamond$ and $\Box\sim$ are not contradictories, \Box and $\sim\Box$ are), Parmenides, judging from Fr. 8.16-18, certainly took them in to be. I think Kirk, Raven and Schofield state the matter well in saying that Parmenides' characterisation of the disjuncts in the Fr. 2 is meant to bring out their mutual incompatibility which is characteristic of contradictories. See G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven & M. Schofield, The Presocratic Philosophers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 246 n. 1. Also cf. D. Gallop, Parmenides of Elea, p. 8 and Aryeh Finkelberg, 'Parmenides' Foundation of the Way of Truth', Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, vol. VI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 43-4.

⁶ cf. Fr. 8.16-18.

⁷ cf. Jonathan Barnes, The Presocratic Philosophers (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 163-5 on the issue of whether Parmenides is confusing *necessitas consequentis* with *necessitas consequentiae*.

⁸ As for the debate about what the subject of ἔστι is, I follow Owen in taking it to be the task of the subsequent fragments, culminating with Fr. 8, to spell this point out. For example, by the time we get to Fr. 6, it is clear that τὸ ἓόν is the subject. For comments on the difficulty surrounding the question of what the subject of ἔστι is, cf. G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', Logic, Science and Dialectic, ed. M.C. Nussbaum (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1986), pp. 9-16 and M.M. Mackenzie (now M.M. McCabe), 'Parmenides' Dilemma', Phronesis 27 (1982), p. 2 and relevant note. Thus until the full nature of the subject is disclosed, to speak of 'it' as attending upon 'Αληθείῃ, is not to say too much, save that it enjoys some sort of relation to 'Αληθείῃ. For a different line on what the subject of ἔστι is, cf. A. Finkelberg, 'Parmenides' Foundation of the Way Truth', pp. 44-7. As for the other controversial issue, i.e. the question of whether the ἔστι is best regarded as predicative or existential, cf. M. Furth, 'Elements of Eleatic Ontology', The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Alexander P.D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor Press, 1974), pp. 242-48 and Kirk, Raven & Schofield, The Presocratic Philosophers, p. 245ff. For a general discussion of the verb 'to be' in ancient Greek philosophy, cf. Charles Kahn, The verb εἶναι in Ancient Greek (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1973) and 'The Greek Verb "to be" and the Concept of Being', Foundations of Language, vol. II (1966), pp. 245-62.

⁹ I am following Mourelatos and Finkelberg in translating φράσαις as 'show' or 'point out' instead of 'to

intelligible content about which to think and thus cannot be thought. Consequently, it must be abandoned. As a result of eliminating the οὐκ ἔστι disjunct, Parmenides has narrowed his options considerably. With one of the two disjuncts eliminated, and, given that one of the two disjuncts must hold, *a fortiori* the ἔστι disjunct holds.

However, before Parmenides examines ‘ἔστι’, he raises the possibility of a third option in fragments 6 and 7 (the route of the βροτοί which was alluded to in the proem):

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ’ ἀπὸ τῆς, ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν
πλάττονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν
στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται
κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φῦλα,
οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτόν νενόμισται
κού ταῦτόν, πάντων δὲ παλίντροπὸς ἔστι κέλευθος.¹⁰

Presumably, Parmenides takes this step in order to rule out any other possible alternative, prior to taking up the ἔστι route. For it is clear that by the time we come to the eighth fragment, he supposes that every option, save that which ‘is’, has been exhausted (Fr. 8.1-2). The third option, according to Parmenides, consists in the equating and confusing of the contradictories, being and not being. In virtue of this confusing and conflating of contradictories, the epistemology of mortals, i.e. their knowledge of the phenomenal world, is untenable. For their mental activity is riddled with contradictions and, as a result, is incoherent and unintelligible. So, as this option too is not a viable one on the grounds of unintelligibility, Parmenides is left with only one alternative (by a process of elimination), τὸ εἶναι. It is the only intelligible route left.

As remarked above, Parmenides does not question whether or not there is thinking. Rather, as with being or that which ‘is’, he takes it to be self-evident that there is thinking. His interest is in exploring the exact nature of that which ‘is’ and how thinking relates to it, and not in demonstrating whether that which ‘is’ is or whether there is thinking. So, how do thinking and being relate to one another?

Fragments 3 and 6.1-2 shed some light on the nature of this relationship.

utter’. The primary sense of this verb is to show where something is or the way to somewhere. See A.P.D. Mourelatos, ‘Φράζω and its Derivatives in Parmenides’, *Classical Philology* 60 (1965), pp. 261-2 and A.P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 20 and relevant note. Also see A. Finkelberg, ‘Parmenides’ Foundation of the Way Truth’, p. 54.

¹⁰ Fr. 6.4-9. Trans: ‘... and secondly from that path on which mortals knowing nothing stray two-headed (I prevent you), for perplexity in their own breasts directs their minds astray; and they are borne on deaf and blind alike in bewilderment, people without judgement, by whom being and not being have been thought both the same and not the same, and the path of all is backward turning.’

Taking the third fragment first, we read:

... τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι.¹¹

The fragment as translated ('... for the same thing is both for thinking and being.') simply claims that that which 'is' for thinking also 'is'. In other words, that which 'is' is a necessary condition for thinking. Thinking cannot think that which 'is not'; such an endeavour, as we have seen, is vacuous and untenable. However, some scholars, such as Gregory Vlastos, take this fragment to make the much stronger claim: '... to think and to be are the same thing'.¹² This interpretation, I think, is problematic. For there is nothing in the argument prior to the eighth fragment that enables one to infer such a strong identity thesis. Fragment 2 does not give us that. The eighth fragment, however, is the complete disclosure of what that which 'is' is. Thus (if we assume that Fr. 3 fits before Fr. 8)¹³ one should not then expect a full account before Fr. 8 of how it is that being relates to thinking, i.e. whether they are identical or not. Only when the nature of being has been fully disclosed, will we, the reader, be in a position to understand why being and thinking enjoy the relation they do.

At present, we know two things: the ἔστι route is and thinking can only think that which is intelligible, i.e. that which 'is'. For that which 'is not' is unintelligible. Moreover, as thinking cannot think that which 'is not', the contradictory fusion of the two (the route taken by the βροτοί), is also unintelligible. Thinking must think that which 'is'. Thus that which 'is' is a necessary condition for thinking. Yet, although being is a necessary condition for thinking, it does not follow that that which 'is' is identical with thinking. For example, that which is thinkable or intelligible need not be exhaustive of that which 'is'. As it stands, all that can be said is that if there is thinking, then there must be being but not that, if there is being, there is necessarily thinking. Fragment 6 reinforces the view that being is a necessary condition for thinking (and by extension speaking):¹⁴

¹¹ Fr. 3. Trans: '... for the same thing is both for thinking and being.' I am following Burnyeat's translation. See Myles Burnyeat, 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed', The Philosophical Review 91 (1982), p. 15.

¹² Gregory Vlastos, 'Parmenides' Theory of Knowledge', The Transactions of the American Philological Association 77 (1946), p. 68.

¹³ On the place of Fr. 3 cf. A. Finkelberg, 'Parmenides' Foundation of the Way of Truth', p. 55.

¹⁴ On speaking as an extension of thinking, see J. Barnes, The Presocratic Philosophers, pp. 158-9.

χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὼν ἔμμεναι · ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,
μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν.¹⁵

Thus these two passages shed some light on the relation between thinking and being. Yet, in order to understand fully the relation (or relations) which hold between them, the nature of τὸ ἐὼν will have to be entirely disclosed.

III Fragment 8

The Parmenidean account as it stands is one in which three possible routes have been posited, two of which have been rejected. One remains:

μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο
λείπεται, ὥς ἔστιν.¹⁶

Now, the eighth fragment, with the exception of the last part (50-61), outlines exactly what τὸ ἐὼν is and, in the process, the nature of the relation which it has to thinking. This fragment can be divided roughly as follows: lines 1-6 set out the program of attributes, the σήματα, which will be discussed; ll. 6-25 examine monistic attributes in temporal context;¹⁷ ll. 26-33 introduce monistic attributes, this time from a spatial perspective, which has implications for qualitative homogeneity; ll. 34-41 then looks at thinking and its relation to the monistic principle; ll. 42-49 finish the spatial account; and ll. 50-61 serves as an introduction to the second part of the poem entitled Δόξα, Fragments 9-16.

First a list of the σήματα: τὸ ἐὼν is ungenerated (ἀγέννητον), imperishable (ἀνώλεθρον), whole (οὔλον),¹⁸ of a unitary kind (μουνογενές), unmoved (ἀτρεμές), perfect (τέλειον),¹⁹ entirely together (ὁμοῦ πᾶν), one (ἓν) and continuous (συνεχές).²⁰

¹⁵ Fr. 6.1-2. Trans: 'It is necessary that that which is for speaking and thinking is (exists); for it is for being, but nothing is not.' For a discussion of the modal fallacy which occurs here see G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', p. 60 and D. Gallop, Parmenides of Elea, p. 24.

¹⁶ Fr. 8.1-2. Trans: 'Only one story of a route remains, that it is.'

¹⁷ Owen argues that lines 26-33 are part of the temporal argument. He maintains that this passage restates two previous conclusions and argues for temporal invariance with the use of the 'πείρας' imagery. I disagree with that reading for two reasons: i) much of the imagery has become spatial and ii) there is no point in using this passage to establish temporal invariance, since lines 6-21 establish *inter alia* that point. Cf. G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', pp. 18-21.

¹⁸ D-K read οὔλομελές at 8.4. Gallop reads οὔλον μουνομελές, see D. Gallop, Parmenides of Elea, p. 64. I follow Tarán's reading of οὔλον μουνογενές. See L. Tarán, Parmenides (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 88-93 Also cf. J. Barnes, The Presocratic Philosophers, p. 179 and 'Parmenides and the Eleatic One', Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie Band 61 (1979), pp. 8-9.

¹⁹ Following Owen's reading. Cf. G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', pp. 23-4. Also cf. A.H. Coxon, The

The first argument (6-21) focuses on generation and destruction.²¹ The claim Parmenides attempts to defend is that γένεσις and ὄλεθρος have no place in a proper account of the nature of τὸ ἐόν:

τὼς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος.²²

Beginning with generation, Parmenides deploys two arguments against it: Firstly, he claims that if τὸ ἐόν were generated, its state, prior to the generative act, would be different from its present state, τὸ ἐόν. For such a generative process entails that τὸ ἐόν is different from what it now is, τὸ ἐόν. At one point, it would, therefore, have had to have been in a state of not being. For the exclusive and exhaustive nature of the disjunction in Fr. 2, a point which Parmenides reiterates at 8.16-18, leaves no alternative:

πῇ πόθεν αὐξηθέν; οὐδ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐάσσω
φάσθαι σ' οὐδὲ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν
ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι.²³

Moreover, assuming such a generative process were the case, one would, as a result, have to accept that not being and being are causally related. For not being would have to be thought of as that which produces or is generative of being. And this would attribute a metaphysical status, i.e. a causal capacity, to not being which is entirely inappropriate. For nothing can be said or thought about not being.²⁴

The second argument which Parmenides brings against a generative account is the 'why now as opposed to later' argument.²⁵ Assuming being could have been in a state of not being and assuming a causal relation could hold between them, when was the γένεσις of τὸ ἐόν from not being supposed to have occurred? Why, Parmenides asks, should it occur at t_2 as opposed to t_1 or t_3 :

Fragments of Parmenides (Maastricht: Van Gorum & Co., 1986), p. 61. D-K read ἀτέλεστον.

²⁰ Fr. 8.2-6.

²¹ cf. J. Barnes, The Presocratic Philosophers, p. 179. Also see his 'Parmenides and the Eleatic One', p. 12.

²² Fr. 8.21. Trans: 'Thus coming to be is extinguished and perishing not to be heard of.'

²³ Fr. 8.7-9. Trans: 'How and whence did it grow? Not from not being shall I allow you to think or say. For it is not to be said or thought that [it] is not.' Also cf. Fr. 7.1.

²⁴ Fr. 8.8-9 which is a reiteration of his rejection of the not being route in the second fragment. Cf. J. Barnes, The Presocratic Philosophers, p. 186.

²⁵ cf. J. Barnes, *ibid.*, pp. 187-8 on the Principle of Sufficient Reason with respect to this argument. I think, *pace* Barnes and Stokes, that such an account is unnecessarily complex for what Parmenides is trying to achieve, see n. 31 and M.C. Stokes, One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy (Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 1971), pp. 253-5.

τί δ' ἄν μιν καὶ χρέος ὤρσεν
ὑστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φῦν;²⁶

For, if it is in a state of non existence at t_1 , there is no reason for it to change, as there is nothing to cause it to do so at that time or any other. For there is only that which is or is not. These two arguments lead Parmenides to conclude that there was never a time in which or at which τὸ ἐόν came into being, since it always was what it is. And because its present state is a state of being as opposed to not being, it always has been being.

οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεὼν ἐστὶν ἢ οὐχί.²⁷

The essential point, I think, is that τὸ ἐόν be constant in its state, whatever that state might happen to be. Now, as its present state is τὸ ἐόν for the metaphysical reasons outlined in Fr. 2, it follows that its past state -- if you can call it that -- is the same as its present, i.e. τὸ ἐόν. And, given such constancy of state, Parmenides also uses this argument to deny that τὸ ἐόν ever perishes.²⁸ For the argument is applicable in both directions:

οὐδέ ποτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς
γίγνεσθαι τι παρ' αὐτό· τοῦ εἵνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι
οὔτ' ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδησιν,
ἀλλ' ἔχει· ἡ δὲ κρίσις περὶ τούτων ἐν τῷιδ' ἐστὶν·
ἐστὶν ἢ οὐκ ἐστὶν.²⁹

Thus τὸ ἐόν is sempiternal; it is temporally homogeneous.³⁰ Yet, as the argument stands, strong monism does not follow. Qualitative homogeneity and quantitative identity or invariance (i.e. being equal throughout) are still lacking in both spatial and temporal forms. To say that τὸ ἐόν always is, at best, commits one to a weak sort of monism. For temporal homogeneity is only a necessary condition for both qualitative homogeneity and quantitative identity.³¹

Parmenides begins to address these issues in the next section (Fr. 8.22-25) by redirecting his focus inwards.³² For it is no longer a matter of whether τὸ ἐόν 'is' but

²⁶ Fr. 8.9-10. Trans: 'And what need could have impelled it to grow later or sooner, if it began from nothing?'

²⁷ Fr.8.11. Trans: 'Thus it must either be completely or not at all.'

²⁸ cf. Kirk, Raven & Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 250.

²⁹ Fr.8.12-16. Trans: 'Not ever from what is will strength of trust allow it to become something apart from itself (following Barnes). Therefore neither its coming to be nor its perishing has Justice allowed, relaxing her shackles, but she holds [it] fast. Concerning these things the decision rests on this: [it] is or [it] is not.' Cf. J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 189 for all the various construals of ll. 12-3.

³⁰ cf. J. Barnes, 'Parmenides and the Eleatic One', p. 19.

³¹ It is for this reason that the Principle of Sufficient Reason is inappropriate to the earlier argument.

³² cf. G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', pp. 13 and 18-19.

rather what it is like at all the temporal instants within that time:

οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστὶν ὁμοῖον.³³
οὐδέ τι τῇ μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἵργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι,
οὐδέ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος.
τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστὶν· ἐόν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει.³⁴

The first line speaks of identity through time that does not permit of internal temporal division (οὐδὲ διαιρετόν). In other words, we are not permitted to speak of τὸ ἐόν at t_1 , τὸ ἐόν at t_2 and τὸ ἐόν t_3 . The claim that τὸ ἐόν is indivisible, along with its temporal homogeneity, is another *step* towards establishing qualitative homogeneity. For temporal homogeneity ensured the constancy of, at least, certain non-relational properties, such as being.³⁵ But now, given the temporal indivisibility, it follows that τὸ ἐόν will be unable to sustain different properties at different times, relational or non-relational within its sempiternal existence. Whatever properties it has, relational or otherwise, it has them sempiternally. None of its properties can alter. It can neither take on new ones or lose others. As yet, the argument has shown it to be qualitatively constant, not qualitatively homogeneous. It is only when this temporal argument is coupled with its spatial counterpart, ll. 26-33 that, I think, qualitative homogeneity will be established, the latter being a necessary condition for strong monism.

On the basis of indivisibility through time, Parmenides infers that there is no temporal inequality within τὸ ἐόν (οὐδὲ τι τῇ μᾶλλον or οὐδὲ τι χειρότερον) in which one part -- using the term 'part' very loosely -- is any different from another at any particular time. The entire whole is full of what is (πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος), and, as such, it does not lend itself to being broken down into temporal instants in which a discrepancy can be discerned between the parts *qua* more or less full. The quantitative properties of τὸ ἐόν -- assuming there are any -- do not lend themselves to being analysed into successive instants in which quantitative discrepancies can be discerned at specific times, say t_1 and t_2 . Like, their qualitative counterparts, they are constant at each

³³ Following Owen in taking ὁμοῖον adverbially and not entailing qualitative homogeneity. See G.E.L. Owen, *ibid.*, p. 13. As Barnes notes, if it meant to imply qualitative homogeneity, then Parmenides would be introducing it without warrant, since he has not argued for it. See J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 210. For the view that it does imply qualitative homogeneity, see L. Tarán, *Parmenides*, pp. 107-8.

³⁴ Fr. 8.22-25. Trans: 'Nor is it divisible, since it all alike is; nor is it somewhat more here, which would keep it from holding together, nor is it somewhat less, but it is all full of what is. Therefore it is all continuous; for what is is in contact with what is.'

³⁵ cf. J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 188.

possible instant, assuming instants were discernible (which they are not). Consequently, Parmenides' τὸ ἐόν is one continuous indivisible temporal whole.³⁶

The two temporal arguments (6-21 and 22-25) demonstrate that (i) τὸ ἐόν always 'is' and (ii) within that sempiternal period it does not alter in any sense. Next Parmenides has two spatial arguments (ll. 26-33 and 42-29). The first, I want to argue, focuses on the qualitative dimension and the latter, the quantitative. Beginning with the first account, in this section Parmenides introduces the idea of boundaries or limits at ll. 26 and 30-31 (μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν and Ἀνάγκη πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει [sc. τὸ ἐόν]). The lines which are contained within these references to πείρατα, 27-30, reiterate the two previous conclusions (ll. 27-8 that of 6-21 and ll. 29-30 that of 22-5). But this passage (ll. 26-33) is not simply a reiteration of those previous conclusions. For one thing, the notion of boundaries tells us that if there is to be an identity thesis, this time it will be in a spatial guise, i.e. there will be no *place* within these limits in which τὸ ἐόν differs from any other *place*.

So far the eighth fragment has examined qualitative properties -- both relational and non-relational -- and quantitative properties in that order. Now, if Parmenides is to achieve a symmetry and balance between those two arguments and these latter two, presumably the first one should develop the qualitative dimension and the latter the quantitative. And it is clear that the second of the two arguments does develop the quantitative side. For there he does speak of quantitative properties such as size and equality (ll. 44-9). So if he were to introduce qualitative homogeneity, it should presumably come in the third of the four arguments, namely, the present one. Moreover, if, as I shall argue, in the next section (ll. 34-41) Parmenides is claiming that the relation which holds between thinking and being is one of strict identity, then his argument would be well served by introducing qualitative homogeneity before making such a strong identity claim. Finally, given that one of the signs which Parmenides mentioned at the outset was μονογενές (8.4), some account of qualitative homogeneity is to be expected. With these demands in mind, let us now turn to Parmenides' closing remarks

³⁶ To use a well known phrase, τὸ ἐόν enjoys the state of the timeless present in which it might be tensed grammatically but not logically. Taken from G.E.L. Owen, 'Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present', Logic, Science and Dialectic, ed. M.C. Nussbaum (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1986), pp. 27-8.

of this section. For it is there, I think, that qualitative homogeneity can be discerned:

οὐνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὼν θέμις εἶναι·
ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδευές· [μὴ]³⁷ ἐὼν δ' ἅν παντὸς ἐδεῖτο.³⁸

τὸ ἐὼν is complete (οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον). If it were lacking (ἐπιδευές), Parmenides infers that it would lack everything (ἅν παντὸς ἐδεῖτο). I take this passage to be indicative of qualitative homogeneity for the following reason: Whatever qualitative properties it has, they must not only be omnipresent but also undifferentiatible.

Let me begin with the weaker claim, omnipresence. If it were the case that one property were in one place and not in another place, i.e. if any of its qualities could be differentiated locally, τὸ ἐὼν could be said not 'to be' in some sense. For the property would be restricted to a particular part and, as a result, not be or inhere in another part. But omnipresence alone only entails coextensivity and not qualitative homogeneity. It is entirely compatible with there being a plurality of properties. However, I think the notion of 'not lacking' in any way whatsoever can also be shown to entail qualitative homogeneity for the following reason: Different predicates which express different properties, such as τὸ ἐὼν is 'x' and τὸ ἐὼν is 'y', would cause τὸ ἐὼν to lack inasmuch as τὸ ἐὼν, by satisfying one predicate, would not be simultaneously satisfying another.³⁹ And to the extent that one predicate excludes -- is differentiated from -- another, τὸ ἐὼν is 'not' the other. In other words, the notion of differentiation itself allows for a sense in which τὸ ἐὼν can be said to lack and, as a result, not to be. Now given the force of Parmenides' claim at 8.33, if it were to lack in any conceivable way whatsoever, it would lack everything altogether. It would be not being.

Thus far the account of τὸ ἐὼν entails that it is an eternal, unchanging continuous entity, whose qualities are undifferentiated temporally or spatially. Now, as for what the properties are, it is clear from Fr. 2-7 that the only two which Parmenides has in mind are being and thinking. So, if he is to retain the view that there is more than being, now would be the appropriate time to introduce τό νοεῖν and explain how it and

³⁷ As with most commentators (including D-K), I am leaving out the μὴ. See L. Tarán, Parmenides, p. 119 and D. Gallop, Parmenides of Elea, p. 68.

³⁸ Fr. 8.32-33. Trans: 'Wherefore it is not right for that which is to be incomplete: for it is not lacking; but if it were, it would lack everything.'

³⁹ Tarán uses a similar argument to deduce not being at 8.22. I agree with his point but I do not think it should be introduced at line 22 for the reasons which I, *pace* Barnes, noted earlier. See L. Tarán, Parmenides, p. 106 and n. 33.

τὸ εἶν relate to one another; thus the next section (34-41)⁴⁰ begins:

ταὐτὸν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.⁴¹

So what is the exact nature of their relation (νοεῖν) and (οὐνεκεν = τὸ εἶν⁴²)? To begin, as the last section has shown, coextensivity is not sufficient to account for the way in which the constituents within the boundaries relate to one another. Rather, in keeping with the tone of the previous section, Parmenides is asserting their identity. This identity thesis, I think, explains his use of ταὐτὸν. For the demands of such a strong claim are already in place. Within this Parmenidean principle there is no room for qualitative differentiation in either the temporal or spatial arenas. Hence the next part of this passage (35-8) speaks of τὸ εἶν as exhausting the whole. But as thinking is expressly said to be part of that whole, one is then forced to conclude that they are identical with one another:

οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ εἶντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφρατισμένον ἐστίν,
εὐρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν. οὐδὲν γὰρ (ἢ) ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται
ἄλλο πᾶρεξ τοῦ εἶντος, ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν
οὔλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμεναι.⁴³

Thus by the time we reach 8.38, we have a changeless, shackled, indivisible whole which is qualitatively undifferentiated. Thinking and being are identical with one another. The only way to deny the identity between thinking and being, is either to place thinking in the not being category or to disregard Parmenides' account of τὸ εἶν as given in the first 33 lines of Fragment 8.⁴⁴ Neither option being a viable one, the end result looks something like this: τό νοεῖν ἔστι τὸ εἶν. In virtue of this strict identity

⁴⁰ Tarán takes this section to be proof that thinking and being are not identical because that would make thoughts or thinking eternal when in fact they are not everlasting. In response, I would agree with Fränkel, and say that for Parmenides insight is not an act but a form of existence. See L. Tarán, *Parmenides*, pp. 198-200 and Herman Fränkel, 'Studies in Parmenides', *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, vol. II, edd. R.E. Allen and D. Furley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 3. Or to state the matter differently, what Tarán calls thoughts I would call opinions, at least as far as Parmenides is concerned.

⁴¹ Fr. 8.34. Trans: 'To think and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same.'

⁴² Following the rendering of Kurt von Fritz, who takes the view that the οὐνεκεν preserves the sense of οὐ ἔνεκα. See Kurt von Fritz, 'Nous, Noein and their Derivatives in Pre-Socratic Philosophy', *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alexander P.D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor Press, 1974), pp. 45-47. Vlastos takes the same line, see G. Vlastos, 'Review of J. Zafiropoulo *L'École éléate*', *Gnomon* 25 (1953), p. 168.

⁴³ Fr.8.35-38. Trans: 'For not without being, in which it (sc. thinking) unfolds itself (or is expressed), will you find thinking; for nothing else either is or will be besides that which is, since it was just this that Fate did shackle to be whole and changeless.' Following von Fritz' translation of ἐν ᾧ πεφρατισμένον ἐστίν. See Kurt von Fritz, 'Nous, Noein and their Derivatives in Pre-Socratic Philosophy', p. 47.

⁴⁴ Vlastos uses this argument, viz. if thinking exists then, given the monistic account, it must be identical with being. See G. Vlastos, 'Review of J. Zafiropoulo *L'École éléate*', p. 168.

thesis, thinking will have the all same attributes as being. It too will be complete, self-identical, continuous, changeless and eternal.

The remainder of this section (38-41) touches on the mortal beliefs about what they take to be true, the phenomenal world:

τῶι πάντ ὄνομ(α) ἔσται,
ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῇ,
γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναί τε καὶ οὐχί,
καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διὰ τε χροῶ φανὸν ἀμείβειν.⁴⁵

The point of this passage at this stage, it seems, is that of highlighting the difference between thinking and the opinions of mortals. It was argued earlier that the latter were empty unintelligent utterings because they were riddled with contradictions. As a result, opinion as a third route was untenable. Now, having been exposed to how thinking relates to τὸ εἶν, we can appreciate fully the difference between thinking and the opining of mortals. The former is one with the only legitimate metaphysical entity, while the latter is incapable of entertaining a proper relation to anything because of its fundamentally flawed epistemological structure.

Assuming the monistic account and the identity thesis as outlined thus far is correct, a new question emerges: why the need for the further monistic account (8.42-49)? In short, the identity relation between thinking and being pertains to qualitative differentiation. Their identity is premised upon qualitative homogeneity. The spatial context so far has served as the setting for an examination of qualitative properties. But if Parmenides' account of τὸ εἶν is to be complete -- if it is to entail strong monism -- he must also rule out quantitative differentiation. And this is the issue which he now addresses in the final argument (8.42-49).

⁴⁵ Fr. 8.38-41. Trans: 'Therefore all that mortals posited convinced that it was true will be a [mere] name, coming into being, perishing, being and not being, change of place and exchange of brilliant colour.' Following D-K. Also cf. L. Tarán, *Parmenides*, p. 84. It must be stressed, however, that line 38 is a controversial and disputed reading of the manuscript. D-K and Tarán, prefer πάντ' ὄνομ(α) ἔσται over ὀνόμασται or ὠνόμασται. The latter reading has been defended by Woodbury and Long and slightly modified by Burnyeat (as Woodbury is open to Owen's grammatical objection). Cf. Leonard Woodbury, 'Parmenides on Names', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 (1958), p. 147ff., A. A. Long, 'The Principles of Parmenides' Cosmogony', *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, vol. II, edd. R.E. Allen and D. Furley (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1975), p. 88, Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', p. 69 and Myles Burnyeat, 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed', p. 19, n.22. Burnyeat's translations reads: 'Wherefore it (the one being) is named all the names which mortals have laid down in the (mistaken) belief that they are true (of it).' In either case what mortals say is meaningless since on the former reading they are only names referring to nothing or on the latter their words might refer to that which 'is' but they speak of it in an incorrect and contradictory fashion. The βροτοί do not speak in a meaningful manner.

τὸ ἐόν extends or reaches out to the πείρατα in such a way as to leave no place vacant from the centre to the limit. This is because τὸ ἐόν is complete (τετελεσμένον, 8.42-44). If it was not, it would be nothing.⁴⁶ The image he employs is of a smooth well-rounded sphere (8.43) which is indicative of there being no gaps or empty places. Rather it is identical throughout, consisting of like bordering on like (46-47).⁴⁷ There is no internal quantitative differentiation or discrepancies. No part -- using the term rather loosely -- is bigger or smaller than any other part (8.44-45), greater or less (8.48). There is quantitative invariancy throughout:

οἱ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἴσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει.⁴⁸

As with our first quantitative account, units -- this time spatial ones such as size and place as opposed to temporal ones -- are inapplicable. For they presuppose something which lends itself to division and differentiation, something which can be quantified over. With this final argument, Parmenides has closed off the last possible avenue for any sort of differentiation, quantitative differentiation within the spatial domain, i.e. size, density or place. Thus strong monism has been established.

IV Parmenides' Realism and Idealism

It has been said that Parmenides, like Wittgenstein, throws away the ladder once he achieves his goal.⁴⁹ In other words, he destroys the route by which he reached τὸ ἐόν in Fragment 8. I want now to focus on his route or, so to speak, his ladder. It can be understood in one of two ways, which I shall refer to as realism and idealism. The difference between these two interpretations lies in the causal relation between the epistemic subject and object: Either that which 'is' is a cause of thinking or thinking causes there to be being. I must stress, however, that either account is an equally plausible reading of the text and both accounts cease to be functional with the introduction of Parmenides' strong monism.

Starting with the realist interpretation: Thinking requires an independent pre-

⁴⁶ cf. 8.11 and 33.

⁴⁷ cf. Fr. 4.2-4.

⁴⁸ Fr. 8.49. Trans: 'For equal to itself from every direction, it lies uniformly within limits.'

⁴⁹ cf. G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', p. 22 and 'Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present', p. 30.

existent referent. Without this object, thinking would be impossible, for there would be no intelligible content to think. The former is a *necessary condition* for the latter. Thus the assumption which the realist interpretation makes is that there exists a mind-independent object (or objects). If the object is not already in place, i.e. actually exists independent of the mind prior to that mind thinking it, then the act of thinking -- at least in any meaningful sense -- is impossible.⁵⁰ Thinking itself is incapable of generating its own intelligible content. Rather, some pre-existent object(s) acts on it. This interpretation ensures two things: (i) its objects enjoy a mind independent existence and (ii) these objects are constitutive of the thinker's intellectual content. In other words, the objects act upon the thinker and are that in virtue of which thinking is possible.

Let me now turn to the text in order to extract this reading. The dramatic setting of the poem set out in the proem casts Parmenides in a passive role. His position is that of one having some divine thing ('Αληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ) revealed to him. Despite the fact that this is only the proem, the imagery is well suited to a realist reading in that Parmenides is having something shown to him which, at least on the face of it, has a separate divine existence. One does not get the sense that he is conducting a thought experiment. Rather he has been brought before a goddess to be shown the structure of reality, both that which truly is and what is not.⁵¹ It would seem, therefore, at least as far as the dramatic setting is concerned, the text is better served by the realist interpretation.⁵²

The second fragment introduces the framework of the route which will lead to the Parmenidean principle. The language employed in this fragment is that of roads of inquiry (ὁδοί διζήσιος). On either reading, the central issue is what makes them routes.

⁵⁰ On this line, Myles Burnyeat remarks: 'Thought requires an object, distinct from itself, and that object, Parmenides argues, must actually exist'. Myles Burnyeat, 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed', pp. 15-6. According to him the ancients, Parmenides included, never got beyond the realist position. He thinks that it is a post-Cartesian phenomenon to think of the categories of thought as constituting or determining the nature of the world. For the ancients it is the other way around. cf. Myles Burnyeat, 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed', pp. 22-3 and 33.

⁵¹ I think Vlastos is right to emphasise the religious aspect of all this imagery. To paraphrase, Parmenides is presenting the reader with a mystical revelation in which he is attempting to bridge the gulf between mortal and divine. See Gregory Vlastos, 'Parmenides' Theory of Knowledge', pp. 74-5.

⁵² Perhaps a far more obvious sign post in the proem which points the reader towards the realist interpretation lies in how one understands 'Αληθείη. For 'Αληθείη is after all the object which goddess is going to disclose. If we follow W.J. Verdenius, the realist account will be victorious. For he takes the line that 'Αληθείη is to be understood as the true nature of things and not some mental category or property. See W.J. Verdenius, 'Parmenides B2.3', *Mnemosyne* 15 (1962), p. 237.

Are they constructs of the mind? Is it the thinker's thinking them which makes them what they are, i.e. a route which leads to something? Or is it the objects to which they lead that makes them what they are? The realist account would emphasise two points: (i) The terms employed by Parmenides in Fragment 2 seem to imply that there exist pre-thought objects or referents and (ii) the grounds for discarding the οὐκ ἔστι route.

Starting with (i), the term διζήσις (apparently coined by Parmenides from the verb διζήμαι) connotes the idea of a search or inquiry in which the existence of the object of that search is not in question.⁵³ That is, the term carries with it the sense that one is searching for a pre-existent object. So to judge by Parmenides' choice of terminology or coinage of earlier terminology, it would seem that the intellectual inquiry is not constitutive of that object. Such an account also fits nicely with Parmenides' description of the ἔστι route as the path of persuasion. For persuasion, according to him, attends upon (ὀπηδεῖ) reality or truth, a notion which implies that the existence of what is attended upon, in this case reality or truth, is presupposed.

As for (ii) the manner in which the οὐκ ἔστι route is discarded, one could argue that the acceptance of one route and the denial of the other is based upon a somewhat modified or primitive form of denotability.⁵⁴ In the case of τὸ ἓόν, there is something in Parmenides' ontology, i.e. τὸ ἓόν, which corresponds to the idea or thought. There is some mind independent referent out there to denote. In the case of not being there is no referent which can be picked out, and, consequently, that route is inaccessible. A *necessary condition* for thinking, i.e. an object, is not satisfied.

I shall pass over the third fragment as there is not much either reading can hope to gain from it. The fourth fragment, however, could be taken as substantiating the realist reading:

λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόωι παρεόντα βεβαίως·
οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἓόν τοῦ ἓόντος ἔχουσθαι
οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντῃ πάντως κατὰ κόσμον
οὔτε συνιστάμενον.⁵⁵

⁵³ I take this point about διζήσις from A. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*, p. 67. Mourelatos cites the example of the Homeric voyage motif as a place in which the ὁδός διζήσιος imagery is employed. In Heraclitus we find the phrase ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν (D-K Fr. 22/101) which does not conflict with the realist account, since the existence of that which is consulted or sought after, i.e. myself, is not in question.

⁵⁴ In this I am following M. Furth, 'Elements of Eleatic Ontology', p. 252. By 'modified form' I understand that the notion of multiple sense is left out. There is a one on one mapping.

⁵⁵ Fr. 4. Trans: 'Look upon things which, although far off, are firmly present to the mind; for you will not

Here Parmenides speaks of the thinker not being able to sever being from being, i.e. not being able divide up τὸ ἐόν. According to the realist reading, this fragment is making the point that what thinking can and cannot do depends upon and is determined by the structure of τὸ ἐόν. This claim asserts more than that one must think that which 'is'. It also asserts that one's thinking will have to mirror or accurately depict the structure of what is thought, i.e. being. For 'πάντως' in 'σκιδνάμενον πάντως πάντη' stipulates that even qualitative or quantitative differentiation is unthinkable. The realist would interpret this to mean that the nature or structure of τὸ ἐόν determines the structure of the intellectual process which thinks it.

The realist account, accepting the argument that the βροτοί do not denote anything in their everyday mental activities but just entertain contradictions, would claim that Fr. 5 and some of the imagery in Fr. 6. has the expression it does because there is only one denotable object (a result of having eliminated the two paths), τὸ ἐόν. Thus it does not matter where the goddess begins her discourse. She will be forced to return to that object:

ξυνὸν δέ μοί ἐστιν,
ὀππόθεν ἄρξωμαι· τόθι γὰρ πάλιν ἴξομαι αὖθις.⁵⁶

Similarly, with the circular imagery deployed when discussing the activity of mortals (the aimless wandering [ἦν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν πλάττονται, δίκρανοι] and backwards turning motion [πάντων δὲ παλίντροπός ἐστι κέλευθος]), the realist would take this to be the result of entertaining contradictions.⁵⁷ Because the βροτοί only latch onto vacuous names, names which lack a proper referent, they do not satisfy a necessary condition for thinking. As a result, they are on an aimless backwards turning journey. To conclude, the realist would argue, only if there is a proper mind independent object in place can thinking occur. It is only in virtue of this object (these objects) that the thinker can climb the ladder.

cut off that which is from holding onto that which is, neither scattering itself (τὸ ἐόν) in every way everywhere in order, nor drawing itself together.' Following Gallop's translation. See D. Gallop, Parmenides of Elea, p. 57.

⁵⁶ Fr. 5. Trans: 'It is the same to me where I begin for I shall come back to that place again.'

⁵⁷ Fr. 6.4-9. It is along these lines that Kurt von Fritz remarks: 'It is still the primary function of noos to be in direct touch with ultimate reality'. Kurt von Fritz, 'Nous, Noein and their Derivatives in Pre-Socratic Philosophy', p. 52. For a different view cf. J. Barnes, The Presocratic Philosophers, p. 611. Barnes argues *contra* von Fritz that this is wrong and νοῦς is from time to time erroneous.

What about the idealist reading? It too can give an account of how the epistemic subject relates to that which 'is'; of how one climbs the ladder to reach the Parmenidean principle, τὸ εἶν. Unlike the realist account, however, in the case of the idealist interpretation it is not a question of a pre-existent mind independent entity acting on the thinker but thinking itself causing there to be being. For thinking, by its very definition, stipulates that there must be some intelligible content, i.e. being.⁵⁸ Thus, thinking, given its nature, causes or is generative of being.

Beginning with the proem, presumably the idealist would not be too worried about the setting since it is just that, a dramatic backdrop for the entire poem and not just the Way of the Truth. Parmenides does not properly begin to set out the route or the ladder which he will climb to reach his principle until the second fragment. As for the second fragment, it is perfectly compatible with the idealist reading. For all that Fragment tells us is that thinking, in order not to be vacuous, must have some content and this content must have the status of a *something*. It must 'be'. Nothing -- which is not -- is not constitutive of intellectual content. Thus thinking itself, as just noted, is stipulative of that content. For if it is to be meaningful or successful as an intellectual activity, it requires this content. As for whether the content is mind dependent or not, that is irrelevant. The crucial point is that the content of thinking 'is', regardless of whether it exists solely in the mind or not. The second fragment, therefore, is perfectly consistent with both readings.

The third fragment, as already mentioned, helps neither interpretation. The fourth, however, it was said was well-suited for the realist reading. Is it a problem for the idealist? No. For all that Parmenides asserts is that the structure or nature of τὸ εἶν is such that it is neither cut off from the epistemic subject or itself. It is not scattered about (οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντῃ πάντως). The way in which the idealist reading would account for such a remark is that what the thinker thinks must be such so as to satisfy the

⁵⁸ M.M. McCabe takes this line of interpretation. She holds that Parmenides does not assume 'real objects' of thought *en route* to explaining τὸ εἶν. The basis for such a claim is as follows: 'We think thought must have content otherwise it would be vacuous, and could not be said to occur at all. We think about something, and not about nothing, So if the choice between ἔστι and οὐκ ἔστι can be reinterpreted as a choice between something and nothing, we must take ἔστι. What can be thought is, and nihilism is false. For whatever its status, *something* is happening, even if the event only occurs in my brain. Moreover anything other than something must be impossible. So differentiation is impossible and strong monism may be thought to follow.' M.M. Mackenzie, 'Parmenides' Dilemma', p. 2.

conditions of intelligibility. Thus it must be present to the thinker and cannot be scattered. For if it were not present to the epistemic subject, then presumably it would not be an intelligible object. And if it were scattered then presumably there would be gaps in it which would consist of not being, something which does not satisfy the conditions of being intelligible or thinkable. Thus the idealist would argue that Parmenides outlines the structure of τὸ εἶν as he does in the fourth fragment because thinking demands just such a structure.

Finally, the fifth, sixth and seventh fragments do not pose a problem for the idealist account. For, again, it is simply a question thinking's stipulatory demands. Vacuity and contradiction are inconsistent with a meaningful intellectual activity. Thus, it does not matter where the goddess begins, because if she is going to give a proper account of thinking, she must return that thing which is thinkable, τὸ εἶν. The contradictions of mortals will not suffice. If anything, the grounds on which Parmenides rejects the route opted for by mortals is better suited to the idealist reading than the realist reading. For the problem is not with hybrid objects but their contradictory claims and beliefs. Thus their route is rejected on epistemological and not ontological grounds.

Either reading, realism or idealism, can, therefore, give a coherent account of Fragments 1-7. For both accounts allow for a meaningful relation between the epistemic subject and its object. In the case of realism, τὸ εἶν causes thinking and in the case of idealism, thinking causes τὸ εἶν. Either one is a suitable ladder because they both distinguish between the epistemic subject and its object, the climber and the thing which is climbed.

V

The Identity of the Epistemic Subject and the Intelligible Object

I would like now to conclude with a few remarks about how both interpretations stand in relation to the strong monism, i.e. the strict identity thesis, of the eighth fragment. The essential point about both readings is that they allow for, albeit in different forms, coextensive (i.e. differentiated) *relata*, the epistemic subject and its object. The question then becomes: What does Fragment 8 entail for the epistemic subject and its intelligible object, for these coextensive *relata*? What does Fragment 8 do to the ladder? In short,

the distinction between the epistemic subject and the object is a distinction which cannot be upheld in the face of the strong monism as outlined in that Fragment. The ladder is cast aside. For the account in the eighth fragment prohibits all conceivable distinctions and differentiation, be it quantitative, qualitative, relational or non-relational, given that it sets out such a strict identity thesis. Thus the distinction between the epistemic subject and the intelligible object, τὸ ἐόν, collapses in such a way that the two sides are rendered indiscernible from one another. They are identical.

As a result of this strict identity thesis, what can be said about the epistemic subject and its object? Such an identity thesis is lethal to their existence *qua* 'subject' and 'object'. For as coextensive *relata*, they did not enjoy all the same properties. One was a subject and the other an object. One thought and the other was thought. So, if such a strict identity thesis is allowed to stand, it will not make very much sense to regard the epistemic subject as thinking τὸ ἐόν. For there is no subject to think τὸ ἐόν. Nor will it be very useful to regard τὸ ἐόν as an intelligible object, since it, τὸ ἐόν, is incapable of enjoying any relation whatsoever with anything other than itself. And it could only relate to itself in a rather trivial manner, simple self-identity. The Parmenidean principle, therefore, when fully disclosed, prohibits one from distinguishing either the epistemic subject or the intelligible object, because it does not allow for coextensive *relata*. Thus both the subject and its object (at least *qua* object) are annihilated in the face of such an identity thesis. All of this is to say that when the subject and object are absolutely identical, they cannot be regarded as coextensive *relata*. For the notion of coextensivity is premised upon differentiation. And it is upon this relation -- the coextensive -- that the existence of the epistemic subject and object as subject and object is based. For the concept of 'subjecthood' is vacuous once its relational property, i.e. being a subject in relation to some object, is deleted. And an object, likewise, is only an object, if it is related to a subject.

To conclude, the Parmenidean philosophy leaves room for neither a thinking subject nor an intelligible object. Thus, both the realist and idealist ladders which allowed for the distinction between the subject and object have been discarded. For those ladders had as their very foundation just such a distinction. Parmenides has, as a result of his strong form of monism, left us, his audience, with a challenge; a challenge

which says that the distinction between the epistemic subject and object is an untenable one. A direct result of such a position is that any sort of intellection, be it of self or otherwise, is out of the question. For all intellection is premised upon the distinction between the epistemic subject and intelligible object. If thinking or intellection is to be rescued from this Parmenidean position, then the restoration of *relata* as differentiated and not identical is the next task.

II

Plato's Response to Parmenides

The result of this (sc. the description of the sight-lovers) is that in this book (sc. Republic Bk. V) Plato has said nothing to Parmenides.⁵⁹

The objective of this second chapter is to demonstrate that Plato does have something to say to Parmenides in the closing argument of Republic Bk. V (476d8-480a13). His response is that the epistemic subject and its object are indeed discernible from one another. They are, in fact, coextensive *relata* in their capacities as subject and object. This claim, if it can be defended, does more than just simply rescue an account of self-intellection. It saves epistemology as such from utter vacuity. For the strong monism of Parmenides rendered thinking itself unintelligible. Thus Plato's response is crucial, if we are to have any sort of tenable epistemology, let alone an account of self-intellection. In order to substantiate the claim that Plato is responding to Parmenides' strong monism in the form in which I suggest, I shall begin by drawing attention to some textual parallels between the final argument of Bk. V of the Republic and the Poem of Parmenides: parallels which suggest reading this concluding argument of Bk. V with Parmenides and his monism in mind. Then, I shall attempt a reconstruction of Plato's interpretation of Parmenides' monism with an analysis of two well-known passages and, having done that, return to the closing argument of Republic Bk. V in order to show how this argument does constitute a philosophical response to Parmenides.

I

Literary Echoes of Parmenides in Republic Book V 476d8-480a13

There are very good grounds for interpreting Plato's account of the epistemic subject and its object in the final argument of Republic Bk. V as a response to Parmenides' monism. Let me begin by bringing to light some literary echoes of Parmenides in the Republic passage. Of course, these literary resonances will only constitute the first step

⁵⁹ J.C. Gosling, 'Republic Book V: τὰ πολλὰ καλὰ', Phronesis 5 (1960), p. 128.

in proving that Plato was actually responding to Parmenides. Their function is simply to disclose echoes of Parmenides and his Poem. More significantly, I want then to see whether Plato actually uses these Parmenidean allusions to score philosophical points against the position of his Eleatic predecessor. If the latter can also be shown, then there will be some grounds for claiming that the final argument of Republic Bk. V is best interpreted with Parmenides' Poem in mind.

It has already been noted by others that Plato would have been aware of the striking similarities between his and Parmenides' use of such phrases or terms as τὸ ὄν, τὸ μὴ ὄν, ὡς εἶναι, μὴ εἶναι and δόξα.⁶⁰ This use of terminology, obviously, by itself need not be taken as an indication that Plato is alluding to Parmenides. For example, in the Meno Plato uses the term δόξα systematically without making any philosophical allusion to Parmenides. The context and the manner, however, in which Socrates speaks of knowledge and ignorance and how they relate to being and not being respectively certainly counts more in the way of reminding the reader of Fragments 2, 6.1-3, 7.1 and 8.

More specifically, however, it is striking that Socrates sometimes uses γνώμη (476d5) and γνώσις (477a9, 478c8, 478c10 and 478c13) for knowledge, and at other times uses ἐπιστήμη. This inconsistency in terminology is of some interest since we find γνώμη and its derivative forms in Parmenides (Fr. 2.7, 8.53 and 8.61). Now the fact that Plato alters his terminology by itself might not be too significant. But that he does so just at the point of introducing his own unique Platonic position should give us some cause for concern. For Plato begins his discussion by referring to knowledge as γνώμη and γνώσις but then suddenly at 477b1 in mid-paragraph switches to ἐπιστήμη. The reason, I think, he does switch is because he is departing from the sort of dichotomy which is perfectly suited to the Parmenidean distinction of being and not being (as outlined in Fragment 2) to the Platonic trichotomy, knowledge, opinion and ignorance.⁶¹

⁶⁰ cf. R.E. Allen, 'The Argument from Opposites in Republic V', *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* edd. J.P. Anton and G.L. Kustas (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971), p. 165, W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, vol. IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 492, J.C. Gosling, 'Republic Book V: τὰ πολλὰ καλὰ', p. 128, Vlastos, 'Degrees of Reality', Platonic Studies (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 66.

⁶¹ One could argue that since Parmenides also has the faculty of δόξα, his position, like Plato's, is centred around a trichotomy. In response, I would argue that no matter how one wants to interpret the status of δόξα (as presented in Frr. 6 and 7), the disjunction of Fr. 2 is certainly intended to be exhaustive and exclusive. However, even if one were to argue that Parmenides goes on to introduce δόξα in order to set

For the opposition Plato speaks of at 477a9, γνῶσις and ἄγνωσία, would fit very nicely with the Parmenidean schema of being and not being. However, in the next line Plato begins to speak of a *tertium quid* in a wholly Platonic manner and in the subsequent line he is suddenly referring to the other two epistemological states, knowledge and ignorance, as ἐπιστήμη and ἄγνοία. And throughout the development of his thoroughly Platonic notion of knowledge and opinion as faculties with their distinct independent objects, Plato uses the term ἐπιστήμη (477b1-478b4).⁶²

The next allusion that can be discerned is Socrates' use of ἀνάγκη at 477a9 and 478c3. On those two occasions Socrates is discussing how ignorance is related to that which 'is not', which mirrors Parmenides' use of it at Fr. 8.16-17 when he remarks that, as is necessary, that which 'is not' has to be let go as unthinkable.⁶³ A trace or echo can also be noted in Socrates' description of δόξα as darker (σκοτωδέστερον) than knowledge but brighter (φανότερον) than ignorance, a description which he deploys on two occasions (478c13-14 and 479c8-d1). Such a contrast would no doubt have reminded Plato's audience of Parmenides' use of light and darkness and day and night as a way to distinguish the realm of being from not being (Fr. 1.9-11).⁶⁴

In addition to this, Plato uses the unusual phrase παγίως νοῆσαι at 479c4. παγίως is not a common Platonic term. However, that by itself would not merit any special attention, if it were not for the fact that the only time it does occur in our passage (479c4), it does so with another peculiarly loaded term, νοῆσαι.⁶⁵ Concerning νοῆσαι, it must be borne in mind that νοῦς and its cognate forms only occur two other times in the Bk. V passage, 477e7 and 478b7, and on those occasions they have either an

up a trichotomy, it would be a very short-lived one. For as soon as he posits it, he discards it on the grounds of its contradictory nature; contradiction being something Parmenides is unwilling to tolerate (cf. Fr. 8.16-17). I follow Aryeh Finkelberg in taking δόξα to be a bisection of the second route of Fr. 2, with the result that the formal structure of the original dichotomy (Fr. 2) is left unscathed. See Aryeh Finkelberg, 'Parmenides' Foundation of the Way Truth', pp. 58-60.

⁶² One might object that after 478b4, Plato drops ἐπιστήμη and returns to γνῶσις. In response, I would argue that such a switch is due to the fact that the discussion has turned to opinion's relation to ignorance and Plato is once more referring to the framing faculties of knowledge and ignorance.

⁶³ Also cf. Fr. 8.30 and 10.6.

⁶⁴ Also cf. Fr. 8.57-60 and 9.1.

⁶⁵ There only three other occurrences of παγίως in Plato. They are Republic 434d2, Theaetetus 157a4 and Timeaeus 49d2. Only the Theaetetus passage is remotely similar. Interestingly, in that context too there would seem to be a Parmenidean allusion occurring. There, we are told that it is impossible to have a 'firm notion' (παγίως νοῆσαι) of becoming. The irony of such an odd usage which carried possible Parmenidean overtones in the Heraclitean context of flux would not have been lost on Plato's audience.

idiomatic or rhetorical sense. In the first occurrence at 477e7, νοῦς is part of the ἔχων νοῦν idiom. On the second occasion at 478b7, its function is rhetorical. Socrates is using the imperative form of ἐννοεῖν, ordering Glaucon to reflect on a point about ignorance (ἐννόει δέ). Thus Plato is not using νοῦς or νοεῖν in a technical or philosophical manner as he is with, say, δόξα. It is not part of his epistemological vocabulary in this particular argument. The peculiarity of this phrase becomes all the more loaded when it is remembered that νοῦς and its cognates are littered throughout the first eight fragments of Parmenides' Poem, νοῆσαι itself occurring at Fr. 2.2.⁶⁶ Now if one compares the content of the two passages (Fr. 2.2 and 479c4), a very interesting contrast can be discerned. At Fr. 2.2 Parmenides is distinguishing and clearly demarcating the different paths which are or are not available for thought, i.e. being and not being. With the Platonic text we have a situation in which that which is and that which is not cannot be separated and distinguished in thought but are instead hopelessly confused:

καὶ γὰρ ταῦτα ἐπαμφοτερίζειν, καὶ οὐτ' εἶναι οὔτε μὴ εἶναι οὐδὲν
αὐτῶν δυνατόν παγίως νοῆσαι, οὔτε ἀμφοτέρω οὔτε οὐδέτερον.⁶⁷

It would therefore seem quite plausible that Plato intends to remind his audience of Parmenides with the phrase παγίως νοῆσαι and use it in a context in which the opposite philosophical point is being made.⁶⁸

The final passage of Plato which, I think, presents the reader with a Parmenidean echo is 479d3-5:

Ἡὺρήκαμεν ἄρα, ὥς ἔοικεν, ὅτι τὰ τῶν πολλῶν πολλὰ νόμιμα καλοῦ
τε πέρι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μεταξὺ που κυλινδεῖται τοῦ τε μὴ ὄντος καὶ
τοῦ ὄντος εἰλικρινῶς.⁶⁹

If one compares this account to Fr. 6.8-9,

οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτόν νενόμισται

⁶⁶ That on both occasions, Fr. 2.2 and our Platonic text, the term νοῆσαι occurs at the end of the line could signify an allusion on Plato's part to the hexameter of Parmenides' Poem.

⁶⁷ 479c3-5 Trans: 'For these things also equivocate, and it is impossible to conceive firmly any one of them to be or not to be or both or neither.' All Plato passages in Chapters II and III are taken from the Oxford Classical Texts. Translations of Plato, unless indicated otherwise, are based upon The Collected Dialogues of Plato, edd. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

⁶⁸ In the Theaetetus passage just cited (see n. 65), the inversion is somewhat similar to here inasmuch as in that context one is attempting to hold a firm notion (παγίως νοῆσαι) in the midst of Heraclitean flux and confusion.

⁶⁹ 479d3-5 Trans: 'We seem to have found, then, that the many conventions of the many about the fair and honourable and other things are tumbled about in the mid-region between that which is not and that which is in the absolute sense.'

κού ταύτόν, πάντων δὲ παλίντροπός ἐστι κέλευθος.⁷⁰

there are at least two reasons which lead one to conclude that Plato is alluding to Parmenides. Firstly, the language of custom or belief (νόμος and its derivatives) can be found in both passages with respect to how subjects understand the opinable: Plato uses νόμιμα and Parmenides νενόμισται.⁷¹ Yet more revealing than the similarity in vocabulary is the context in which they are used. In both instances, the focus is on δόξα and the imagery is that of circular motion. For Parmenides, by conflating being and not being, the path taken by mortals when they opine is a backwards turning (παλίντροπός) one. With Plato, the objects of δόξα tumble (κυλινδεῖται) in between being and not being. But despite the similarity in imagery, here too our authors are making markedly different points. For Parmenides, the backwards turning does not apply to an object, the opinable, but pertains to the subject's epistemic process. δόξα, as far as Parmenides is concerned, is a mental state that is subject to contradiction, which causes it to self-destruct as a viable third option. Plato, on the other hand, is speaking about how the object (the δοξαστόν), not the subject, relates to the same opposites (being and not-being) but in a context which is non-contradictory. In effect, Plato uses notably similar imagery to that of his Eleatic predecessor in order to make exactly the opposite point, i.e. to establish a *tertium quid* as a feasible epistemic option.

What these allusions to Parmenides' Poem demonstrate is that the final argument of Republic Book V should be read with it in mind. For there is clearly a link between the two. Moreover, as some of these allusions have clearly shown, the link is stronger than that of simply stylistic and linguistic resonances. Especially with the last two examples cited, Plato places these allusions in contexts in which he is making very different, if not diametrically opposed, philosophical points to those of Parmenides. The issue I am pursuing can now be put as follows: Is it the case that Plato is actually using Parmenides' position as a philosophical foil for his own position in the concluding argument of Republic Bk. V? To be able to say one way or the other, I must first attempt to give a plausible reconstruction of Plato's interpretation of Parmenides' philosophical position, his monism.

⁷⁰ Fr. 6.8-9 Trans: 'By whom being and not-being have been considered both the same and not the same, and the path of all is backward-turning.'

⁷¹ Also cf. 476c2, where Plato refers to the φιλοθεάμονες as ὁ νομίζων.

II

Plato's Interpretation of Parmenides' Monism: Parmenides 128a4-b7, 132b3-c11 & Sophist 244b6-e8

There is evidence in Plato which shows that he attributed two monist theses to his Eleatic predecessor. The first one, the more obvious and commonly accepted account, simply denies the plurality of things. According to this version of monism, there is only one thing. The grounds for claiming that Plato thought Parmenides held such a view can be found at Parmenides 128a4-b7:

σὺ (sc. "Parmenides")⁷² μὲν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασιν ἔν φης εἶναι τὸ
πάν, καὶ τούτων τεκμήρια παρέχει καλῶς τε καὶ εὖ.⁷³

There is nothing very controversial in maintaining that Plato attributed such a position to Parmenides.⁷⁴ However, matters become somewhat more complicated when one tries to attribute a more radical interpretation of Parmenides to Plato. This second (more radical) thesis, for which the first is a necessary condition, goes something like this: In addition to maintaining the singularity of the first account, it rules out every kind of conceivable internal distinction and differentiation. It is a position that adheres to a strict identity thesis, which at most allows for the trivial relation of self-identity. So distinctions, such as the one between that which thinks and that which 'is' or between different epistemic states such as the act of thinking and the mental content or product of that act, the thought which is thought, dissolve, with the result that the distinguished items give way

⁷² For the sake of clarity, whenever I refer to the Parmenides who appears in the Platonic dialogue by that name, I shall use double quotes. Otherwise I am referring to the historical individual, Parmenides the Eleatic. Anticipating an objection against my usage of the dramatic personage of "Parmenides" as a means of getting at Plato's interpretation of the philosophy of the historical individual Parmenides, let me simply say this in my defence. In part I of the Parmenides (the part from which I extract the relevant argument), nothing is attributed to "Parmenides" that contradicts the philosophy of the historical individual Parmenides, which the character in the dialogue is supposed to represent, perhaps with the exception of the last argument (133b4ff.). For example, it would be difficult to deny that the present quote bears a very close resemblance to the philosophy of the historical individual and, more to the point, that this was how Plato interpreted his position. For we find the same view expressed in other places, such as Theaetetus 180e1-4 and 183e3-6. So it would seem to be a legitimate endeavour, within reason, to attempt to extract Plato's interpretation of Parmenides' philosophical position from the manner in which Plato portrays the latter in his dialogues, especially the dialogue in which he is the central figure. Accordingly, if it can be shown that this "Parmenides" puts forth an argument that makes use of certain presuppositions, such as the identity thesis of the second version of monism (which I shall come to shortly), we would have reasonable grounds for taking such an account to be indicative of how Plato interpreted Parmenides.

⁷³ 128a8-b1. Trans: 'You assert in your poem that all is one and for this you advance a very admirable proof.'

⁷⁴ Given that the Republic passage on which I want to focus (476d8-480a13) does not question whether or not a plurality of things exists (for example, the opinables [δοξαστά]) but just assumes that a plurality does exist, I shall not concern myself with this monistic thesis.

to this identity thesis. A direct consequence, therefore, of such a strong identity thesis is that the distinction is ruled out between the epistemic subject (i.e. that which thinks) and its object. (The relevance of this version of monism, i.e. strong monism, to the final argument of Book V is readily apparent, as the latter has the objects of cognition as its focus.) Now, that Plato actually attributed such a strong position to Parmenides, can, I think, be shown from an analysis of two passages, Parmenides 132b3-c11 and Sophist 244b6-e8, taken in tandem.⁷⁵

Beginning with the Parmenides, the relevant passage (132b3-c11) consists of two corresponding arguments (132b6-c8 and 132c9-11) against the hypothesis that the forms are thoughts (νόηματα), mind-dependent entities existing in our souls (ἐν ψυχαῖς):⁷⁶

'Αλλά, φάναι, ὦ Παρμενίδη, τὸν Σωκράτη, μὴ τῶν εἰδῶν ἕκαστον ἢ
τούτων νόημα, καὶ οὐδαμοῦ αὐτῷ προσήκη ἐγγίγνεσθαι ἄλλοθι ἢ ἐν
ψυχαῖς.⁷⁷

Socrates' motivation for positing this hypothesis is to overcome the regress of the Third Man Argument. Now it is essential to bear in mind that the term νόημα is itself ambiguous. It could either mean thought as in the act of thinking, the intellectual process, or it could mean thought as in the intellectual or mental content of that act, the product or result of the intellectual process.⁷⁸ In the first of the two arguments (132b7-132c8) put forth by "Parmenides", he takes νόημα in the latter sense, i.e. as mental or

⁷⁵ A point about the chronology of the Platonic dialogues is in order here. One might object that the dialogues from which I extrapolate Plato's interpretation of Parmenides' monism are later than the Republic and so cannot legitimately be used as examples of what Plato's interpretation of Parmenides might have been when writing Republic Book V. In response, I would argue that nothing in the Republic or any other dialogue prior to it indicates that Plato interpreted Parmenides in a way different from that of the above. Given this lack of evidence, I assume that Plato's interpretation was the same as it appears in his later dialogues. Such an assumption is thinner than, say, the assumption which maintains that Plato had a different interpretation of Parmenides' monism when writing the Republic than the one which appears in the Parmenides and the Sophist. The onus of proving such a shift lies with my opponent.

⁷⁶ There is some debate as to whether the second passage quoted below (132c9-11) constitutes a second new criticism, the first one running from 132b6 up to 132c8, or 132c9-11 is simply the conclusion to which 132b6ff. leads up. I am obviously opting for the first route (i.e. taking 132c9-11 as constituting a second new criticism). For this line of interpretation, cf. M. Burnyeat, 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed', p. 22 and M. Miller Jr, Plato's Parmenides (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 216, n. 37. Also cf. F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1939), p. 92. For the view that it does not constitute a second new criticism, see R.E. Allen, Plato's Parmenides. Translation and Analysis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 153.

⁷⁷ 132b3-5 Trans: 'But Parmenides, said Socrates, may it not be that each of these forms is a thought, which cannot properly exist anywhere but in souls (or minds).'

⁷⁸ On this ambiguity, cf. F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, p. 92 and H. M. Smyth, Greek Grammar (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), §§ 841.2 and 861.1.

intellectual content.⁷⁹ It is in virtue of taking thought in this manner, that he, “Parmenides”, disproves Socrates’ claim (or at least so they both think), with the result that Socrates is back to his original realist position, a position in which the forms enjoyed a mind independent existence. For by saying thought is of some specific characteristic or property (μίαν τινὰ ιδέαν, 132c4) that is present to a whole range of cases, and that this one thing is a form (εἶδος, 132c6-7), it is just assumed that such a thing must be a non-mental entity.⁸⁰ In other words, when the supposed mental content (which is needed for Socrates’ hypothesis to work) is given this form-like description, it ceases to be mental or intentional because only the non-mental can *supposedly* satisfy such a description. The position of “Parmenides” is geared towards showing that there is no such thing as exclusively intentional or mental content, at least in a meaningful sense. On the present account, mental content, assuming there can be any, requires a mind-independent referent.⁸¹ Now, regardless of whether “Parmenides” has disproven Socrates’ hypothesis and shown that content must be mind independent, νόημα or thought in this argument has been understood in the sense of intellectual content, as opposed to the intellectual process or intellectual act. For it is precisely because of this usage of νόημα that the forms are not thoughts.⁸²

Having attacked Socrates’ claim along the lines that the forms, in order to fulfil their role as forms, require a mind independent status, “Parmenides” then offers a second argument (132c9-11) against taking the forms as thoughts (νοήματα). He remarks that if the forms are thoughts, then one is exposed to what *prima facie* appears to be a choice of two absurdities:

⁷⁹ cf. M. Miller Jr, Plato’s Parmenides, p. 216, n. 37.

⁸⁰ Burnyeat speaks of this argument as ‘remarkable in its swiftness and the brutality of its realism’. M. Burnyeat, ‘Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed’, p. 21. Also cf. K.M. Sayre, Plato’s Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 31.

⁸¹ This is the basis for the distinction between νόημα and νοούμενον (132c6). The former refers to the mental content and the latter to the thing out there in the world which is the referent of that content. Cf. M. Miller Jr, Plato’s Parmenides, p. 216, n. 37. It would be difficult to use this distinction as evidence that Plato is portraying “Parmenides” as someone who is not a strong monist, on the grounds that “Parmenides” is *prima facie* distinguishing between the thinker’s mental content and the referent of that content. For the context in which this distinction is drawn is one which is intended to show that, if anything, the mental content of the thinker cannot be separated from the referent but instead ultimately collapses into it, the referent (i.e. the form).

⁸² To quote Myles Burnyeat: ‘Plato is unable to do so [sc. explain the world by reference to the categories of thought] because, ..., he cannot see past the idea that thought must be of something independent of itself.’ M. Burnyeat, ‘Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed’, p. 22.

Τί δὲ δῆ; εἰπεῖν τὸν Παρμενίδην, οὐκ ἀνάγκη ἢ τᾶλλα φῆς τῶν εἰδῶν μετέχειν ἢ δοκεῖ σοι ἐκ νοημάτων ἕκαστον εἶναι καὶ πάντα νοεῖν, ἢ νοήματα ὄντα ἀνόητα εἶναι;⁸³

A step-by-step analysis of the argument might look something like this: The forms are thoughts (νοήματα). Next there are the particulars (τᾶλλα) that participate in these forms (τῶν εἰδῶν μετέχειν). The implication of this participation in the forms, in these νοήματα, is that each one (ἕκαστον) of the particulars thinks. That is, in virtue of their participation, they take on the property of thinking. If not, then the scope of the πάντα in πάντα νοεῖν would not be all-inclusive, i.e. would not include both the particulars and the forms. Yet the force of the *reductio* requires such a strong claim. Hence the argument requires that the forms are νόηματα *qua* ‘acts of thought’ or ‘intellectual processes’,⁸⁴ with the result that the particulars which participate in these forms, along with the forms, think. (This, of course, is to give “Parmenides” the benefit of the doubt and assume he is consistent within this second argument and does not derive thinking [πάντα νοεῖν] from thought *qua* product or content of thinking.)

Assuming it is unacceptable (at least for Socrates) to embrace a conclusion which holds that everything -- including rocks and trees -- thinks (νοεῖν), the other alternative put forward by “Parmenides” is the contradictory (not contrary) claim which holds that there will be some thoughts (νοήματα), i.e. some acts of thinking, which are thoughtless (ἀνόητα).⁸⁵ That is, there will exist some acts of thinking, presumably some particulars, which are thoughtless. (Again, it is assumed that “Parmenides” is being consistent within this second argument by not altering the meaning of νόημα from ‘act of thinking’ in the first disjunct to ‘product or content of that act’ in the second.) Now what it means to say that there will exist some acts of thinking which are thoughtless (ἀνόητα) is that there will exist some acts of thinking which are *not* acts of thinking. Because regardless of how one renders ἀνόητα (i.e. ‘thoughtless’, ‘unthought’ or ‘unthinkable’), νόημα *qua* an act of thinking is incompatible with all of these

⁸³ 132c9-11 Trans: ‘And besides, said Parmenides, according to the way in which you assert that other things have a share in the forms, must you not hold either that each of those things consists of thoughts, so that everything thinks, or else they are thoughts which nevertheless are thoughtless?’

⁸⁴ cf. M. Burnyeat, ‘Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes saw and Berkeley missed’, p. 22-3 and F.M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, p. 91.

⁸⁵ Also cf. F.M. Cornford, *ibid.*, p. 91 and Burnyeat *ibid.*, p. 23 for the view that the disjunction comprises of two contradictory disjuncts, thereby making it exclusive and exhaustive.

meanings.⁸⁶ It is for this reason that Cornford speaks of this second disjunct as a ‘contradiction in terms’.⁸⁷ Thus what makes this passage (132c9-11) a refutation is that the first disjunct is unacceptable, as far as Socrates is concerned, and the second is completely unviable given its contradictory nature. And as the disjunction is intended to be exclusive and exhaustive, Socrates must choose one of the two options or abandon altogether the notion that the forms are νοήματα.

One of the basic assumptions that “Parmenides” makes which enables this argument to go through is that the particulars, by participation in the forms, take on both the generic and specific properties of those forms. For that is how “Parmenides” deduces the conclusion he does in the first disjunct. To illustrate this, in the case of the form of blue, for example, the particular which participates in that form will acquire both the generic and specific properties of that form. It will both *think* and be *blue*. Now whether “Parmenides” is correct to make such an assumption is irrelevant. The issue about whether particulars take on both the generic and specific properties of the forms in the manner which the argument requires is a problem about the doctrine of participation and is of no especial significance when it comes to the issue of strong monism. However, having made the assumption that both types of properties are acquired, it is of pivotal importance that “Parmenides” be consistent throughout this second argument in his use of νόημα *qua* an act of thinking. If he is not, he will either not be able to derive with any validity the conclusion πάντα νοεῖν from belief that the forms are νοήματα or he will undermine the force of ἀνόητα in the second disjunct which is supposed to be a contradiction in terms, or both of the above. Thus the second argument works as a *reductio* on the condition that νόημα is rendered throughout as an act of thinking.

How is this passage, when considered in its entirety (132b3-c11), indicative of strong monism on the part of “Parmenides”? To begin, what both arguments have in common is that they are attacking the same hypothesis, the forms as mind-dependent thoughts. Where they differ, however, is in the manner in which they render the term νόημα. In the first argument, “Parmenides” attacks the hypothesis on the grounds that

⁸⁶ Of course, νόημα *qua* ‘content of that act’ is not incompatible with all of these uses of ἀνόητα, which is all the more reason for taking νόημα *qua* act of thinking, otherwise the force of the second disjunct is lost.

⁸⁷ See F.M. Cornford, *ibid.*, p. 92.

forms cannot be *thoughts qua objects* because objects, at least meaningful ones, are always mind independent. His realism is ‘brutal’ because intentional or mental objects are simply not taken seriously as a viable option. The second argument attacks the hypothesis on the grounds that if the forms were *acts of thinking*, then one would be forced to embrace what *prima facie* appears to be one of two absurdities, πάντα νοεῖν or νοήματα ὄντα ἀνόητα. Now there are two ways to account for this shift in meaning from the first (132b6-c8) to the second argument (132c9-11) on the part of “Parmenides”. One could say that he has equivocated over the meaning of νόημα and in so doing has undermined the strength of what is supposed to be a dual attack upon the forms as νοήματα. He should rather have stuck with one of the two meanings throughout. Or one could take the line, the one which I am advocating, and say it is not so much that “Parmenides” equivocates and slides between the different meanings of νόημα but rather that, as a strong monist, he does not distinguish between them in the first place. Thus the charge of equivocation is of no significance because such a charge is only applicable on the presupposition that they, the different meanings, are distinct from one another to begin with.⁸⁸ “Parmenides” acts exactly as one would expect a strong monist to act; he does not distinguish between the thinking and the object of that thinking but rather takes them to be identical with one another. To conclude, the arguments of 132b3-c11 are indicative of “Parmenides” strong monism to the extent that we see him establishing a dual refutation based upon an *apparent* equivocation, but the sort of equivocation which a strong monist would make. Thus from the “Parmenidean” strong monist point of view, the two arguments are not malaligned. Of course, this identity thesis between the different epistemic states is not sufficient in itself to show that Plato attributed strong monism to “Parmenides” but it certainly is a start.

The second passage, Sophist 244b6-244e7, goes somewhat further in establishing the claim that Plato attributed a strong monistic thesis to Parmenides. In this text, the Stranger and Theaetetus are trying to determine what the Eleatics mean by their

⁸⁸ Given this last claim, one might object to placing so much emphasis on consistency in terms of how to take νόημα in the second argument. In response, I would argue that it is one thing to say that different meanings are used from one argument to the next and try to infer something from that. It is altogether something else to make “Parmenides” equivocate in such a way that the arguments themselves which he puts are incoherent and meaningless. For if he were employing both meanings νόημα in the second argument, it would cease to be *reductio*.

one reality (τὸ ὄν, 244b6-10). In particular they are examining how it, τὸ ὄν, relates to the name or names (“τὸ ὄν” or “ἔν”) which are used to denote it.⁸⁹ The Eleatic Stranger’s first move is to rule out the existence of a plurality of names. He does so on the grounds that there is only one *nominatum* or referent, τὸ ὄν (243c10-d2). However, the pressing issue is whether or not the monist’s principle (τὸ ὄν) can have a name at all. According to the Stranger, there are two possible ways in which the Eleatic principle could have a name. Either the name is different from the thing named or it is the same.

The first option does not really get off the ground because it generates two things, the name and its referent (τὸ ὄν), thereby contradicting the Eleatic’s premise that there is only one thing, one reality:

Τιθεῖς τε τοῦνομα τοῦ πράγματος ἕτερον δύο λέγει πού τινε.⁹⁰

The other option, the name and *nominatum* being the same, breaks down into a further disjunction:

Καὶ μὴν ἂν ταύτόν γε αὐτῷ τιθῇ τοῦνομα, ἢ μηδενὸς ὄνομα ἀναγκασθήσεται λέγειν, εἰ δέ τινος αὐτὸ φήσῃ, συμβήσεται τὸ ὄνομα ὀνόματος ὄνομα μόνον, ἄλλου δὲ οὐδενὸς ὄν.⁹¹

The first disjunct (μηδενὸς ὄνομα ἀναγκασθήσεται λέγειν) renders the name such that it does not denote anything. As a consequence, the name effectively ceases to perform its proper function as a name and collapses into the referent or *nominatum*, which it was supposed to denote. The result of such a collapse is that only τὸ ὄν (i.e. that which is) remains, albeit without a distinct name. This first disjunct, therefore, gives way to the strict identity thesis of strong monism. The second disjunct (τὸ ὄνομα ὀνόματος ὄνομα μόνον, ἄλλου δὲ οὐδενὸς ὄν) offers us a name of name and nothing else whatsoever. It is no longer a question of denoting a thing which ‘is’, τὸ ὄν. This option too will fall into line with strong monism because the name which is denoted by the name, call it name*,

⁸⁹ As Plato goes so far as to make an explicit reference to Parmenides (244e2-7), there can be little doubt as to whom he has in mind here.

⁹⁰ 244d3-4. Trans: ‘But, if he assumes the name is different from the thing, he is speaking of two things surely.’ For a similar view in which the name and the *nominatum* constitute two separate things cf. *Cratylus* 430a6ff. Also see M.M. McCabe, *Plato’s Individuals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 213-5.

⁹¹ 244d6-9 Trans: ‘Whereas if he assumes that the name is the same as the thing, either he will have to say it is not the name of anything, or if he says it is the name of something, it will follow that the name is merely a name of a name and of nothing else whatsoever.’ At this point (244d11), according to Cornford, the text becomes corrupt. He maintains, I think rightly, that the argument about the name and the *nominatum*, by the time we get to the end of the passage quoted (244d6-9), is complete. See F.M. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1935), p. 222.

does not itself denote anything. Of course, then one must question whether it, name*, is a name at all. Assuming it suffers the same fate as the name which did not denote anything in the first disjunct, it will cease to be a name. It will collapse into the Eleatic principle. And if that happens, the other name which was supposed to denote it will in turn cease to denote anything. For the name it was supposed to denote, name*, has fallen by the wayside. Presumably, this name will also be subject to the same difficulties, as it too has ceased to denote anything at all. In the case of either of these disjuncts, it is clear that the Stranger's account of the Eleatic principle is such that it does not allow for any internal distinctions or differentiated relations. The name just dissolves into that thing for which it is a name.

The indiscernibility of the *nominatum* (in this context, τὸ ὄν) and its name from one another and the indiscernibility, in the Parmenides passage, of being an act of thinking and being the content of that act are both consequences of strong monism; consequences of a strict identity thesis. However the attacks cut in different directions. The Parmenides passage concentrates on different epistemic states of the subject, whereas the problem of naming and τὸ ὄν focus on the subject and its object. For names are things that epistemic subjects use to denote things which are (τὰ ὄντα). Since the account of monism outlined in the Sophist passage rules out internal differentiated relations along the subject/object axis -- a view which is further substantiated from the Parmenides' passage quoted⁹² -- it is clear that the epistemic subject's relation to its object would suffer the same fate. And as Plato is obviously well versed in Parmenides' Poem, it is unlikely that the fact that Parmenides often couples thinking and naming (Fr. 2.7-8; 8.17 and 8.35-6) would have been lost on him.⁹³

What the Parmenides and Sophist passages have shown or at least made plausible, is that Plato, regardless of whether he is correct to do so (I think he was), attributed a position to Parmenides that does not make allowances for internal divisions

⁹² cf. n. 89.

⁹³ cf. G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', p. 17 n. 55. I am following Owen in regarding the collapsing of naming and being into one another as extensionally equivalent to that of collapsing thinking and being into one another. However, I depart from Owen when it comes to whether or not Parmenides faced the question itself of whether the two were identical or not. Owen thinks that Parmenides did not face this question and thinks that Plato thought this. I, on the other hand, take the view that Parmenides did not avoid the question but answered it. His answer, as I argued in the previous chapter, was the strict identity thesis which resulted in strong monism. Moreover, Plato interpreted him as doing so.

or distinctions; a position which does not allow for differentiated *relata*. Thus there is a good case for saying that he assigned to Parmenides a version of monism that prohibits the distinction between thinking and mental content, name and *nominatum* and epistemic subject and object, which amounts to saying that Plato took Parmenides to be a strong monist. Given that this interpretation of Plato, especially that of the Parmenides passage, is far from obvious, one can judge its merits best if one views it in tandem with Sections III & IV, where both the philosophical position of the final argument of Republic Bk. V is spelled out and the exact manner in which it constitutes a response to Parmenides' philosophical position.

III Republic Book V 476d8-480a13: Plato's Account of the Faculties

With this interpretation of Parmenides outlined, I want next to turn to the final argument of Republic Book V. There Plato gives an account of the formal structure of the subject's faculties and how it is these faculties relate to their objects or content.

The final argument of this book is designed to illustrate the claim that the mental or epistemic state of the sight-lovers can only be properly described as opinion and not knowledge. The reason for this is that the sight-lovers direct their mental energy towards the multifarious instantiations of the forms instead of the forms themselves (476c2-6). Given their condition, Socrates takes it upon himself to soothe (παράμυθεῖσθαι) them and explain why it is that they do not know what they presume to know but rather only opine it (476e1).⁹⁴

In the process of educating the sight-lovers, Socrates sets out what he considers to be the constitutive components of a psychological faculty. The account he gives is two-fold: There is the effect (ἀπεργάζεσθαι) of the faculty and the object or

⁹⁴ I follow Gosling and Fine in their emphasis of the point that as Socrates is going to explain to the sight-lovers why it is that they do not possess knowledge, he cannot legitimately import into the argument any of his metaphysical assumptions from the passage prior to 476d8, such as the existence of the forms and how they are distinct from the particulars which partake of them. To do so would be futile, since the sight-lover is incapable of grasping anything that pertains to the forms. Instead Socrates' task is to demonstrate to the sight-lovers in a manner comprehensible to them why it is that they do not possess knowledge. See. J.C. Gosling, 'Δόξα and Δύναμις in Plato's Republic', Phronesis 13 (1968), p. 120. Also cf. G. Fine, 'Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* Book V', Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie Band 60 (1978), p. 123.

content over which that faculty ranges or stretches (τέτακται ἐπί). Generally speaking there are two standard interpretations of Socrates' account. Some read it as an object-oriented theory, while others cast it in such a way as to limit the account to the subject and its mental content.⁹⁵ Let us start with the first interpretation, the object-oriented one. This is the view that the type of object determines the type of mental state. So, for instance, the objects of opinion (δοξαστά) are such that they only lend themselves to opining and to the formation of opinions, while the objects of knowledge are accessible to the faculty of knowledge alone.⁹⁶ This view is often referred to as the two-world theory. A consequence of this object-oriented view is that there can only be opinions about sensibles, not forms and only knowledge of the forms and not the sensibles. Leaving aside what Plato says elsewhere, the main problem with this interpretation is that one is forced to defend a claim which at best is very odd and at worst simply false.⁹⁷ For a person could form opinions or beliefs about anything, be it the forms, the Good or whatever. One could also have some sort of knowledge about sensible particulars.⁹⁸

The second interpretation gets around this problem by deflating the role of the object. On this reading, that over which or to which (ἐπί) the faculty in question pertains is not a mind-independent object but rather the mental content of that faculty

⁹⁵ This should not be confused with the long running debate about the status of εἶναι. For these rival interpretations do not divide in the same way as the views on εἶναι do. As for the views on εἶναι, there are three commonly accepted ways to interpret this term. They are the existential (to exist), the predicative (to be so and so) and the veridical (to be true). Cross and Woosley take the existential route, R.C. Cross & A.D. Woosley, Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1964), pp. 145-65. Also see M.C. Stokes, 'Plato and the Sightlovers of the Republic', Apeiron 25 (1992), pp. 103-32. For the most part, however, the latter two interpretations, the predicative and veridical, find favour today. Proponents of the predicative reading include Julia Annas and Gregory Vlastos, see Julia Annas, An Introduction to Plato's Republic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 190ff. and G. Vlastos, 'Degrees of Reality', pp. 58-75. Gail Fine and J.C. Gosling defend the veridical reading. See G. Fine, 'Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* Book V', pp. 121ff. and J.C. Gosling, 'Δόξα and Δύναμις in Plato's Republic', pp. 119-130. For a general discussion of the verb 'to be', cf. Charles Kahn, The verb εἶναι in Ancient Greek, and 'The Greek Verb "to be" and the Concept of Being', pp. 245-62. Kahn argues that Millian distinction between the predicative and existential uses of the verb 'to be' is a distinction to which the ancients did not adhere. On this point, also see M. Furth, 'Elements of Eleatic Ontology', p. 243.

⁹⁶ This view is defended by R.C. Cross & A.D. Woosley, Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary, pp. 170-95, G. Vlastos, 'Degrees of Reality', pp. 58-75 and R.E. Allen, 'The Argument from Opposites in Republic V', p. 165ff.

⁹⁷ In Meno 98a and the Theaetetus 201a, Plato speaks of knowledge and opinion with respect to the same object. And at Republic 506c and 520c we find claims which explicitly contradict the two-world theory. At 506c Socrates claims to have beliefs about the Good and at 520c, it is said that when the philosopher re-enters the cave, he will have knowledge of the things down there.

⁹⁸ To paraphrase Gail Fine, 'this final passage could be made to support a two-world theory but at the cost of being a very bad argument'. G. Fine, 'Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* Book V', p. 122.

and as such is internal to that faculty.⁹⁹ The virtue of this reading is that it avoids the difficulty of not being able to have opinions about objects of knowledge, such as the forms, or knowledge about sensibles. A possible drawback with this reading is that it does not sit well with the two-fold criterion for being a faculty because it undermines the force of the ἐπί, allowing it to be subsumed by the effect (ἀπεργάζεσθαι) of the mental capacity.¹⁰⁰

Before we are in a position to judge whether or not this second interpretation places too much emphasis on the epistemic subject, a closer look is needed at Socrates' formal account of what a faculty or mental capacity (δύναμις) involves and the means by which these capacities are distinguished from one another. To begin, what does Socrates have in mind by a δύναμις?

Φήσομεν δυνάμεις εἶναι γένος τι τῶν ὄντων, αἷς δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς
δυνάμεθα ἃ δυνάμεθα καὶ ἄλλο πᾶν ὅτι περ ἂν δύνηται, οἷον λέγω
ὄψιν καὶ ἀκοὴν τῶν δυνάμεων εἶναι, εἰ ἄρα μανθάνεις ὃ βούλομαι
λέγειν τὸ εἶδος.¹⁰¹

According to this passage, these δυνάμεις constitute a class of things (γένος τι τῶν ὄντων) in virtue of which we are able to perform our perceptual and cognitive functions or activities. To elucidate further what he has in mind, Socrates uses sight and hearing as examples (οἷον λέγω ὄψιν καὶ ἀκοὴν). Now, according to some commentators these examples are of no significance and should be cast aside.¹⁰² In response, I would argue that these examples are, firstly, entirely appropriate for the occasion, given Socrates' hypothetical audience, the sight-lovers. These are people who spend their time watching and listening to beautiful spectacles. Secondly, these examples have a very significant

⁹⁹ cf. G. Fine, *ibid.*, pp. 128-9. Fine, in taking the ἐπί to range over mental content not objects, speaks of one who knows as knowing a piece of knowledge and one who believes as believing a belief. Along similar lines, Gosling speaks of the objects of the faculties as the 'formal object' and Crombie speaks of it as an internal cognate. See Gosling 'Δόξα and Δύναμις in Plato's Republic', p. 123 and I.M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 58.

¹⁰⁰ Gosling, for example, remarks that the ἐπί is a slightly more elaborate version than the effect (ἀπεργάζεσθαι) but they are essentially saying the same thing. Gosling, *ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁰¹ 477c1-4. Trans: 'Shall we say that faculties, powers, abilities are a class of entities by virtue of which we and all other things are able to do what we or they are able to do? I mean that sight and hearing, for example, are faculties, if so be that you understand the class or type that I am trying to describe.'

¹⁰² cf. J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, p. 202 and J. Gosling, 'Δόξα and Δύναμις in Plato's Republic', pp. 123-4. Because Gosling takes δύναμις in a very weak sense, i.e. it is not as specialised as faculty with a proper object but is simply a power which need not have any object whatsoever, he goes on to maintain that sight and hearing are not employed to illustrate what the notion of a δύναμις is. Instead they are only thrown out as examples which are then quickly discarded. On Gosling's reading, the examples have very little, if any, explanatory force.

explanatory role. Seeing and hearing are specific capacities to perform certain types of acts in relation to specific sorts of objects, i.e. the capacity to see that which is visible and to hear that which is audible.¹⁰³ The two do not overlap either in their respective functions or with respect to their objects (at least their proper objects).¹⁰⁴ Thus if the examples of sight and hearing are granted this rather basic explanatory function, it would seem that each δύναμις is to be regarded as a determinate capacity which has a certain power with respect to a certain sort of object.

But, I would argue, the analogy does not stop there. The examples of sight and hearing are also very telling with regard to the sort of relationship that the psychological capacity and its objects enjoy. For the psychological capacities on the sight and hearing analogy naturally lend themselves to a causal interpretation in which the object of the faculty acts upon that faculty, say, as colour acts upon one's faculty of vision. If it is the case that such a causal schema holds for Socrates, then the present account is one in which the epistemic subject and its object have been clearly demarcated from one another. For the objects of these capacities, although they might be thought or perceived, do not themselves have the capacities or powers which allow them to perform such actions, at least not *qua* thinkable or perceivable object.¹⁰⁵ They as objects have the capacity to be perceived but not to perceive. The latter is unique to the subject. Hence the δυνάμεις in the present context are that class or set of things which are constitutive of our 'subjecthood'.

¹⁰³ For a discussion of whether δύναμις should or should not be strictly translated as faculty cf. Adam who thinks that faculty is too technical a term for δύναμις, J. Adam, The Republic of Plato, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), p. 339. Also see Gosling, 'Δόξα and Δύναμις in Plato's Republic', p. 124. For my part I think it irrelevant whether one translates δύναμις as a faculty, capacity or power. What is crucial, however, is that each δύναμις be taken as a specific power which ranges over or effects (ἀπεργάζεσθαι) a specific class of acts and can only be affected by a certain type of object. Bringing this to the surface, I take it, is part of the explanatory force of the examples of sight or hearing.

¹⁰⁴ Of course, one might say the objects of the senses do overlap. Crombie takes this view. Cf. I. Crombie, An Examination of Plato's Doctrines, pp. 58-9. In response, I would say they do not with respect to their proper objects. It must be borne in mind that Socrates' audience is not very philosophically adept. So the last thing he wants to do is make some sort of counter-intuitive claim which *prima facie* is very controversial, such as sight or hearing have the same object. The question of common sensibles is very much a philosopher's point. For other discussions of the different senses and their proper objects, cf. Theaetetus 184aff and De Anima 3.1. For a similar view to mine on this point, cf. M.C. Stokes, 'Plato and the Sightlovers of the Republic', p.120.

¹⁰⁵ This final qualification, viz. *qua* thinkable or perceivable object, is necessary in order to account for those instances in which the object perceived coincidentally is itself capable of perceiving, such as another percipient being. The manner in which to cope with these objects is to distinguish between them *qua* perceiver and *qua* perceptible object and stipulate that it can only perceive in its former capacity and only be perceived in its latter capacity.

On the present interpretation, therefore, the examples that Socrates uses are taken very seriously.¹⁰⁶ What remains to be seen, however, is whether or not the explanatory force of these examples as outlined is borne out by Socrates' subsequent account:

δυνάμεως δ' εἰς ἐκεῖνο μόνον βλέπω ἐφ' ᾧ τε ἔστι καὶ ὃ ἀπεργάζεται, καὶ ταύτῃ ἐκάστην αὐτῶν δύναμιν ἐκάλεσα, καὶ τὴν μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ τεταγμένην καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀπεργαζομένην τὴν αὐτὴν καλῶ, τὴν δὲ ἐπὶ ἑτέρῳ καὶ ἑτερον ἀπεργαζομένην ἄλλην.¹⁰⁷

At this point, Gosling's claim that the two sides (i.e. that to which the faculty is related [ἐφ' ᾧ] and that which it, the faculty, effects or accomplishes [ὃ ἀπεργάζεται]) essentially amount to the same thing, becomes crucial.¹⁰⁸ A vital piece of evidence for Gosling's case that they do amount to the same thing comes at 477b10ff. There Socrates is discussing what knowledge is related to: Οὐκοῦν ἐπιστήμη μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ ὄντι πέφυκε, γινῶναι ὡς ἔστι τὸ ὄν. From this passage, Gosling concludes that the object is either just a formal one or is simply highlighting a different task, to know that (ὡς) that which is is. This interpretation might be very compelling as far as 477b10-11 is concerned but as for the present passage, it seems rather ill-suited. For with the account of a δύναμις quoted above (477c9-d5), the two-fold structure (ἐφ' ᾧ and ὃ ἀπεργάζεται) is expressed in such a way that it does not lend itself to the sort of collapsing or telescoping which Gosling's position entails. Firstly, Plato's use of the τε καί expression in the pivotal phrase ἐφ' ᾧ τε ἔστι καὶ ὃ ἀπεργάζεται is standard Greek for expressing two distinct things.¹⁰⁹ It emphasises their distinctness. Secondly, the fact that Plato actually bothers to repeat both of these phrases (ἐφ' ᾧ and ὃ ἀπεργάζεται) together three times within the one sentence in which he introduces them also tells against their simply being different ways of expressing the same thing.¹¹⁰ Finally, there is the contextual point. Before 477c1 Socrates had not yet clearly set out what he took to be the relationship between the

¹⁰⁶ cf. n. 102.

¹⁰⁷ 477c9-d5 Trans: 'But in the case of a faculty I look to one thing only, that to which it is related and what it effects, and it is only in this way that I come to call each of them a faculty, and that which is related to the same thing and accomplishes the same thing, I call the same faculty, and that to another and which effects another, I call another.'

¹⁰⁸ See n. 100 and cf. J.C. Gosling, 'Δόξα and Δύναμις in Plato's Republic', pp. 123-5.

¹⁰⁹ cf. J.D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 503-11 and H. M. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, § 2974. A nice literary illustration of this use of τε καί can be found in Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, l. 927: τό τ' ἄρχειν καὶ τὸ δουλεύειν (to rule and to be a slave).

¹¹⁰ cf. G. Santas, 'Hintikka on Knowledge and its Objects in Plato', *Patterns in Plato's Thought*, ed. J.M.E. Moravcsik (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1973), p. 38.

faculty and its content or object. It is only here in 477c9-d5 that we have what Socrates considers to be his proper explanation of just how a faculty relates to its *relatum*. Accordingly, as soon as Socrates does make that remark at 477b10-11, which Gosling takes as proof for his interpretation, Socrates interrupts himself in order to introduce these distinctions:

Οὐκοῦν ἐπιστήμη μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ ὄντι πέφυκε, γινῶναι ὡς ἔστι τὸ ὄν; --
μᾶλλον δὲ ὧδέ μοι δοκεῖ πρότερον ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι διελέσθαι.¹¹¹

These rather specific textual points aside, there is another and perhaps more important advantage in not undermining or circumventing the difference between these criterial constituents (i.e. the subject and object of the faculty). Once they are distinguished, the relevance of Socrates' choice of sight and hearing as examples becomes that much more apparent. For if those examples are taken as a guide, it makes perfect sense to take the present expressions (ἐφ' ᾧ and ὃ ἀπεργάζεται) as highlighting two different things: one, the mental capacities' effect, and the other, the object to which that effect is related. On this reading, the meaning of ὃ ἀπεργάζεται consists in the manner in which the faculty apprehends its object, while the ἐφ' ᾧ refers to the sort of objects which the faculty ranges over, i.e. the sort that are accessible to that type of apprehension. Both the manner of apprehension and the object that lends itself to that sort or mode of apprehension are required. Thus in order to understand the nature of the differences between the various faculties, one must not only grasp what it, the faculty, accomplishes or effects -- the mental process of the faculty -- but also that to which the faculty is related. It is along these lines that I interpret the meaning of Socrates' remark in the passage quoted above (477c9-d5) when he says that he only thinks there is one faculty when the effect and its object are of like kind. Yet if the account which Gosling advances were correct, Socrates would presumably be misguided in making such a claim. On my interpretation, the various faculties can only be properly distinguished by making reference both to the nature of their capacity and the mode of accessibility of the object.¹¹² So, for instance, in the case of δόξα, a proper understanding of that faculty

¹¹¹ 477b10-12. Trans: 'So is knowledge naturally related to that which is, to know that that which is is? But rather before we proceed we must draw the following distinctions.'

¹¹² Such a line does not commit me to the existential interpretation since the predicative reading can refer, although it need not, to objects distinct from the faculty which may or may not have a mind independent existence.

requires both what is capable of opining and what is opinable. However, none of this entails that the object itself be exclusive to the faculty, only its mode of accessibility, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of the two-world account. Only when the subject and object are taken together is the definition of the faculty complete.

The subsequent passage in which the various mental capacities are distinguished from one another (477d6-478e5) bears witness to this duality. For Socrates in his demarcation of δόξα from ἐπιστήμη does not restrict his account to their effects (ἀπεργάζεσθαι), i.e. that one faculty is fallible while the other is not (477e6-7). Rather this difference of effect can only be properly or fully appreciated if some reference is made to the object as also being different:

Ἐφ' ἐτέρῳ ἄρα ἕτερόν τι δυναμένη ἐκάτερα αὐτῶν πέφυκεν;¹¹³

Thus when Socrates does finally distinguish δόξα and ἐπιστήμη, both aspects of the difference are given equal emphasis:

Ἀδύνατον, ἔφη, ἐκ τῶν ὁμολογημένων· εἴπερ ἐπ' ἄλλῳ ἄλλῃ δύναμις πέφυκεν, δυνάμεις δὲ ἀμφοτέραί ἐστων, δόξα τε καὶ ἐπιστήμη, ἄλλῃ δὲ ἐκάτερα, ὥς φαμεν, ἐκ τούτων δὲ οὐκ ἐγχωρεῖ γνωστὸν καὶ δοξαστὸν ταὐτὸν εἶναι.¹¹⁴

The same two-fold criterion is also called upon when distinguishing δόξα from ἄγνωσία. Socrates does not only distinguish the two *qua* effect, viz. δόξα is sometimes false and sometimes true, whereas ignorance is never true, but he also refers to the fact that ὁ δοξάζων does δοξάζειν some thing (ἐν γέ τι), whereas ignorance does not. This emphasis on the role of the objects cannot be over-stated in the context of this final argument of Bk. V, since the last section of the argument (478e7-480a13) is entirely devoted to establishing what it is that qualifies as an object of δόξα.¹¹⁵

Assuming the dual criterion reading as outlined is correct, how does this position avoid the two-world account and the difficulty which was attributed to that position? The difference between the two is that here we have a criterion that is dual not two. That is, it does not consist of two completely separate components, but rather of

¹¹³ 478a4-5. Trans: 'Thus each of them being a different power are naturally related to a different thing'.

¹¹⁴ 478a12-b2 Trans: 'Impossible by our own admission he said. If different faculties are naturally related to different objects and both opinion and science are faculties, but each different from the other, as we say -- these admissions do not leave place for identity of the knowable and the opinable.'

¹¹⁵ Socrates himself explicitly marks this division in the text by remarking at 478e7 Τούτων δὲ ὑποκειμένων.

two components that enjoy an inter-definitional or coextensive relation with one another. Yet it does not follow from that claim, that one cannot have beliefs about the Good or knowledge of particulars. The shortcoming, however, in only satisfying one side or aspect is that it does not constitute knowledge or opinion in the strict definitional sense. For the objects in question, when they are inappropriate, do not allow the mental capacity to be fully effective because it has not been fully affected. But to say this is not to say that the faculty cannot have any relation to an inappropriate object *simpliciter*. Just because a faculty has a proper object, it does not follow that that proper object is all that the faculty can relate to.¹¹⁶ For instance, one could argue that the sensible world is knowable to the extent that it participates in the forms. But the faculty of knowledge will not be fully effective because it examines as intelligible an object which, strictly speaking, is unintelligible. That is, there is an object -- in this case, a particular -- but that object is put into a mode of presentation for which it is not best suited, and to that extent has a lesser effect on the mental process of the faculty.

IV Plato's Response to Parmenides

Having discerned a connection between the text of Parmenides and the final argument of Bk. V and having given an interpretation of the latter, what does the final argument of Bk. V have to say to Parmenides? How does it constitute a response?

The Bk. V passage attacks the strong monism of Parmenides on two fronts. The first front centres around Plato's introduction of a proper *tertium quid*, the faculty of opinion.¹¹⁷ The axis on which this attack operates is vertical. Plato, unlike his Eleatic predecessor, holds that there are three individual faculties which enjoy a hierarchical or top to bottom relation. On this basis, Plato illuminates the structure of knowledge by drawing on the faculty of opinion, situated in between knowledge and ignorance. In so doing, Plato stresses the compatibility of opinion and knowledge and thereby secures a place for opinion.

Plato's second line of attack on Parmenides' strong monism is more radical.

¹¹⁶ cf. J. Annas, An Introduction to Plato's Republic, pp. 210-11.

¹¹⁷ This view has already been noted by Vlastos, 'Degrees of Reality', p. 66.

For it examines what it is to be a faculty or mental capacity, instead of just presupposing them. The point of this second criticism is to emphasise the distinction and demarcation of the epistemic subject from its object. To appreciate the force of this attack, the passage running from 477c1-4 must be recalled, where Plato outlines what it is to be an epistemic subject. Keeping in mind that just a few lines earlier Plato introduced his own epistemological vocabulary (ἐπιστήμη), abandoning the Parmenidean terminology, he now makes a point of announcing that he must set out exactly what he means (λέγειν) by a mental capacity. If one considers this epistemological outline in tandem with the strong monism which I argued Plato attributed to Parmenides, it soon becomes apparent how Plato is attempting to undermine one of the fundamental -- perhaps the most fundamental -- tenets of Parmenides' monism. For Plato is setting out the structure, with the help of the sight and hearing analogy, of the epistemic subject in such a way as clearly to differentiate and demarcate it from its object. In other words, he is setting out a structure that prohibits any sort of strict identity thesis between the epistemic subject and its object, between that which thinks and that which is. This lack of a strict identity between the two sides is then further enhanced by the subsequent passage in which Plato emphasises the distinction between the subject's effect and the objects over which it ranges.

Of course, one could claim that Plato's argument requires these distinctions and that the introduction of Parmenides and his monism only confuses things. In response, I would argue that if one were to allow all of the allusions to Parmenides in this closing argument to stand (Section I), it would become very difficult not to interpret this epistemological account of Plato as a response to Parmenides, when that account goes right to the core of the latter's philosophy, or at least his philosophy as interpreted by Plato. Parmenides' strong monism makes the perfect philosophical foil for Plato's account.

To conclude, if we go back to Gosling's original remark, I think it is clear both that and why he is wrong. Indeed, Bk. V has much to say to Parmenides. For Plato in this argument meets the challenge of Parmenidean monism. He articulates a clear account of the epistemological subject and its object, establishing them as coextensive *relata*. Of course, the argument on the surface is there to soothe the sight-lover. But this

does not diminish the force of Plato's response to Parmenides. If anything, it enhances the argument by adding a wonderful sense of irony to the passages in question, since Plato is addressing two audiences who intellectually could not be further apart.

III

Plato's Epistemic Subject

In Chapter I, it was argued that Parmenides' strong monism rendered the epistemic subject and its object indiscernible from one another. The consequences of such a position were that nothing could be said either about the intellect or its activity, thinking, perhaps with the exception of the following trivial self-identity claim: whatever the intellect is, it is what it is. Chapter II, in response to this Parmenidean strict identity thesis, established the epistemic subject and its object as coextensive (i.e. differentiated) *relata*. For the account of what it is to be a faculty consisted of the activity of that faculty, its effect, and the object to which that activity is related; the components were discernible from one another. Thus the major achievement of Chapter II was that the activity of the epistemic subject, thinking, had been rendered intelligible, because the *relata* had been clearly distinguished and demarcated from one another. However, what the account of Republic Book V did not offer was what exactly the epistemic subject consists in; what is the epistemic subject *per se*. Book V focused on the epistemological relation which holds between the subject and its object without ever explaining what it is to be an epistemic subject. It might have explained, by analogy, the various functions of that subject in relation to its object(s) but until the essential or distinguishing features of the epistemic subject itself are outlined, neither is an account of what the intellect is nor an account of how it might have itself as an object of thought possible.¹¹⁸ In other words, the intellect will remain anomalous, and, consequently, so will an account of self-intellection. For there is no point in attempting to offer a theory of self-intellection, if one cannot give a proper account of what it is to be a an epistemic subject. Until that is done, we will not be in a position to explain how that subject relates to itself as an object. Chapter II, therefore, in establishing the epistemic subject and object as coextensive *relata*, although a necessary development on the strict identity thesis of

¹¹⁸ The same criticism could be levelled against the analogies of the Line, Sun and Cave. For these analogies too presuppose the epistemic subject and examine it in terms of what it does or how it functions in relation to the appropriate sort of object(s).

Parmenides, is only the first step. For the sort of relation in which the subject has itself as an object is only tenable if the nature of that subject is fully disclosed.

The text I want now to examine is the Theaetetus. For there Plato does offer us an account of what it is to be an epistemic subject and how it is that such a subject might relate to itself as an object. The structure of the chapter is as follows: I shall begin by examining the Protagorean account of the subject. Once it is clear why such an account is untenable, the focus will shift to the Platonic account of what it is to be an epistemic subject. Once the nature of the epistemic subject has been disclosed, we shall be in a position to evaluate whether and how the intellect, the epistemic subject, can be its own object of intellection.

I The Protagorean Subject: Theaetetus 152c1ff.

Plato's own account of the epistemic subject stems from his rejection of the Protagorean one. So the place to begin is with Protagoras. Once it is clear why Plato rejects the Protagorean account, we will be in a strong position to appreciate why Plato's epistemic subject takes the form it does.

When Theaetetus offers his definition of knowledge at 151e2-3, οὐκ ἄλλο τί ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη ἢ αἴσθησις, Socrates interprets it to be the same thing as Protagoras' Measure doctrine (151e8-152a4).¹¹⁹ He introduces the notion of 'appearances' (τό φαίνεσθαι) and equates it with perception (αἴσθησις, 152c1).¹²⁰ The result of such a move is that Theaetetus' claim 'knowledge is perception' (αἴσθησις) is recast as 'knowledge is that which appears' (τό φαίνεσθαι) to the perceiver. The perceiver's perceptions are to be understood in terms of how things appear 'to' and, as a result, are 'for' him. The way things appear to the perceiver is constitutive of what they are for him. As a consequence, the perceiver's perceptions -- as befits knowledge -- are incorrigible (ἀψευδές, 152c5-6). Inasmuch as the perceiver perceives things, he is the

¹¹⁹ cf. John McDowell, Plato's Theaetetus, translated with notes, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 120-121 and Michael Frede, 'Perception in Plato's Later Dialogues', Essays in Ancient Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 5. Given that Socrates refutes both Protagoras and Theaetetus separately, I am not implying that the two positions are identical, but only that at this early stage in the dialogue, Socrates treats the two as if they were.

¹²⁰ cf. David Bostock, Plato's Theaetetus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.42.

measure of them.¹²¹ The veridicality of the perceiver's perception is guaranteed simply in virtue of the perceptual act occurring.

In order for the Protagorean account of knowledge -- an account which maintains that everything is true -- to succeed, the individual's status as a measure must be secured. And in order to be a successful measure, that individual's perceptions must be both indicative of the way things are and exhaustive of all cognitive possibilities.¹²² Otherwise, the individual measure will be liable to be contradicted either by another perceiver or by himself, with the result that he will not be a measure. In short, the possibility of contradiction and the Measure doctrine are incompatible.

Socrates, on behalf of Protagoras, opens with the example of how the wind can appear simultaneously cold to one person and not cold to another and yet both of their perceptions are veridical.¹²³ Objects (since they are assumed, e.g. the wind) are going to have to be structured in such a way as to be simultaneously 'φ' for 'x' but 'not φ' for 'y'.¹²⁴ In order to accommodate such a claim, Socrates invokes a Heraclitean account of external reality in which no perceptible object has a static or fixed nature *per se* (καθ' αὐτό) but is always in a state of becoming (ἀεὶ δὲ γίγνεται):

Ἐγὼ ἐρῶ καὶ μάλ' οὐ φαῦλον λόγον, ὥς ἄρα ἐν μὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ οὐδέν ἐστιν, οὐδ' ἂν τι προσείποις ὀρθῶς οὐδ' ὅποιονοῦν τι, ἀλλ' ἐὰν ὥς μέγα προσαγορεύῃς, καὶ μικρὸν φανεῖται, καὶ ἐὰν βαρὺ, κοῦφον, σύμπαντά τε οὕτως, ὥς μηδενὸς ὄντος ἐνὸς μήτε τινὸς μήτε ὅποιονοῦν· ἐκ δὲ δὴ φορᾶς τε καὶ κινήσεως καὶ κράσεως πρὸς ἄλληλα γίγνεται πάντα ἃ δὴ φαμεν εἶναι, οὐκ ὀρθῶς προσαγορεύοντες· ἔστι μὲν γὰρ οὐδέποτε οὐδέν, ἀεὶ δὲ γίγνεται.¹²⁵

¹²¹ McDowell spells out the argument in roughly similar terms: (i) If something appears 'f' to someone, then it is 'f' for him (ii) Something's appearing 'f' to someone is the same thing as his perceiving that thing as being 'f' (iii) If someone perceives something as being 'f', then it is 'f' for him. See John McDowell, *Plato's Theaetetus*, p.120.

¹²² This is essentially a matter of scope, which is to say the Protagorean account, if it is to be successful, cannot be limited to perceptual predicates alone. In other words, believing and judging must also be included in addition to perceiving. As M.M. McCabe notes, once Protagoras enters the discussion, 'the way things seem' is no longer exclusively perceptual but is judgmental as well. M.M. McCabe, *Plato's Individuals*, p. 134. On this issue of scope also cf. D. Bostock, *Plato's Theaetetus*, p. 42, John McDowell, *Plato's Theaetetus*, p. 120 and Myles Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, translation by M.J. Levett revised along with commentary by M. Burnyeat (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1990), p. 30.

¹²³ 152b1ff. On this point cf. Sarah Waterlow, 'Protagoras and Inconsistency', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* Band 59 (1977), p. 32 and David Bostock, *Plato's Theaetetus*, pp. 43-44.

¹²⁴ cf. Myles Burnyeat, 'Protagoras and Self-Refutation in Plato's Theaetetus', *Philosophical Review* 85. (1976), p. 182.

¹²⁵ 152d2-e1. Trans: 'I'll tell you now this is no ordinary theory, I mean the theory that there is nothing which in itself is just one thing: nothing which you could rightly call anything or any kind of thing. If you call it heavy, it is liable to appear as light and so on with everything, because nothing is anything or any kind of thing. What is really true is this: the things of which we naturally say that they 'are' are in the process of coming to be, as the result of movement and change and blending with one another. We are

Perception is to be understood as a private affair and that which the perceiver perceives must be consistent with this privacy:¹²⁶

καὶ ἡμῖν οὕτω μέλαν τε καὶ λευκὸν καὶ ὅτιοῦν ἄλλο χρῶμα ἐκ τῆς
προσβολῆς τῶν ὁμμάτων πρὸς τὴν προσήκουσιν φορὰν φαίνεται
γεγεννημένον, καὶ ὃ δὴ ἕκαστον εἶναί φαμεν χρῶμα οὔτε τὸ
προσβάλλον οὔτε τὸ προσβαλλόμενον ἔσται, ἀλλὰ μεταξύ τι
ἐκάστω ἴδιον γεγονός.¹²⁷

As the beliefs of the ‘measurer’ must be accurate at all times, the notion of appearances (τό φαίνεσθαι) takes on a pivotal role, because it enables one’s perceptions to be indicative of the way things are in such a way as to avoid being contradicted by or contradicting the perceptions of another perceiver.

Moreover, the perceptions/beliefs of a ‘measure’ must also be exhaustive of all the cognitive possibilities. Otherwise, ‘φ’ could appear to him in certain way, while he simultaneously harbours a contradictory belief about the same ‘φ’. An example of this would be the moon appearing a foot in diameter to someone despite the fact that that individual has the belief that it is much larger. Rather, the way things appear to ‘x’ are the way things are for ‘x’. What appears to be the case and what actually is the case must always coincide for the perceiver, if he is to be a successful measure. To put it another way, there is no place for the distinction between being and appearance. Thus as objects or the objective world have been assumed from the outset, these objects will have to be such as to be fragmented not only synchronically (as above) so as to avoid the beliefs of ‘x’ and ‘y’ contradicting one another, but they must also be capable of satisfying all the beliefs of ‘x’ diachronically. For what appears to ‘x’ to be the case about ‘φ’ at t_1 , t_2 and so on, actually is the case at t_1 , t_2 and so on.

Is it still possible for a perceiver to contradict himself? Socrates’ initial outline (152d2-e1), when spelled out (153d4ff.), not only speaks of perceivable objects constantly changing but perceiving subjects as well. The perceptual act itself takes place when these two fluctuating sides meet. Thus the account as it stands attributes flux both to the *measurer* and to the *measured*. As a consequence, the epistemic subject is

wrong when they say they ‘are’, since nothing ever is, but everything is coming to be.’ Translations are based upon the Levett translation.

¹²⁶ cf. M.M. McCabe, *Plato’s Individuals*, p. 271.

¹²⁷ 153e5-154a2. Trans: ‘According to this theory, black or white or any other colour will turn out to have come into being through the impact of the eye upon the appropriate motion; and what we naturally call a particular colour is neither that which impinges nor that which is impinged upon, but something which has come into being between the two, and which is private to the individual percipient.’

continually changing:

ἔχεις τοῦτο ἰσχυρῶς, ἢ πολὺ μᾶλλον ὅτι οὐδὲ σοὶ αὐτῷ ταῦτόν διὰ
τὸ μηδέποτε ὁμοίως αὐτόν σεαυτῷ ἔχειν;¹²⁸

It never remains the same from t_1 to t_2 and so never perceives things in the same way at different points in time. However, fluctuation of the sort just quoted is by itself insufficient to prevent the subject from comparing his perceptions or beliefs with one another. The change that Socrates speaks of above does not necessarily rule out second-order perceptions or beliefs, i.e. perceptions/beliefs about one's own perception or belief about something.¹²⁹ And as long as there is room for second-order perceptions/beliefs, there is room for self-contradiction. In order to rule out the possibility entirely of one being able to contradict oneself, Socrates' account will need to be more radical than the one outlined thus far. And so it is when he further initiates Theaetetus into the mysteries of this position (156a2ff).

Now the account speaks of active and passive motions which are nothing in and of themselves but when these motions, assuming they are commensurate, come together perception occurs (156d3ff.). At that point one has seeing eyes and tasting tongues. But before two commensurate motions collide, there is nothing (157e4-7). The seeing eye and the tasting tongue last only as long the perceptual episode lasts. In other words, the subject only lasts as long as the perceptual act does. The perceptual subject is a series of completely disconnected and autonomous happenings; a series of atomic perceptual episodes. As a result, now there is no possibility of having an underlying continuous subject which persists through the change and which could compare one perceptual act to another. Instead of having a changing subject, we have something much more radical, a collection of utterly isolated episodic perceptual subjects. It is a subject that is unable to sustain any sort diachronic identity whatsoever:

Οὐκουν ἐγώ τε οὐδὲν ἄλλο ποτὲ γενήσομαι οὕτως αἰσθανόμενος· τοῦ
γὰρ ἄλλου ἄλλη αἴσθησις, καὶ ἄλλοιον καὶ ἄλλον ποιεῖ τὸν

¹²⁸ 154a7-8. Trans: 'Wouldn't you be much more disposed to hold that it doesn't always appear the same to yourself because you never remain the same as yourself?'

¹²⁹ This should not be confused with self-perception. In the case of second-order perceptions (or beliefs) its is not the self which is the object or content under consideration. Rather it is the content of the first-order perceptions or beliefs that is under consideration. And the second-order perception is just the comparing and contrasting of those first-order ones. Cf. M.M. McCabe, *Plato's Individuals*, p. 271. She speaks of second-order perceptions/beliefs as *superepisodes*, which are distinct from the first-order episodes.

From such a radical atomised account of the subject, self-contradictions cease to be a factor. For there is no underlying subject which could be contradicted by itself or anything else. The subject, or rather subjects, is nothing over and above this bundle of discrete instantaneous episodes.¹³¹ It has, in effect, become a series of atomised subjects which endure but an instant. Thus the epistemic subject is not in a position whereby it can compare one perceptual episode with another. For it is entirely devoid of any stable focal point, over and above the stream of perceptual episodes, from which to compare these episodes.

Not only does this subject lack any diachronic identity, it also lacks any synchronic identity as well. On the present reading, synchronic perceptions would require two different subjects; a subject for each perception.¹³² The perceiving subject is, on this Protagorean account, really an aggregate of many disconnected subjects:

δεῖ δὲ καὶ κατὰ μέρος οὕτω λέγειν καὶ περὶ πολλῶν ἀθροισθέντων, ᾧ
δὴ ἀθροίσματι ἄνθρωπόν τε τίθενται καὶ λίθον καὶ ἕκαστον ζῷόν τε
καὶ εἶδος.¹³³

The epistemology of the subject within the confines of this theory is such that it must be viewed as a series of different subjects sequentially and, if necessary, contemporaneously. The structure of the subject is entirely episodic, lacking any sort of identity. The account as it stands is one in which the individual's status as a measure has been secured but in doing so it has become clear that that individual is really a plurality of individuals. That is, to be a measure in the Protagorean sense entails being a plurality of measures in that each disconnected episode requires a new epistemic subject, and that subject is a measure.

¹³⁰ 159e6-160a1. Trans: 'And I shall never again become percipient of anything else. A perception of something else is another perception, and makes another and changed percipient.'

¹³¹ As Burnyeat notes, at 159d-e it is revealing the way the text switches indifferently between Socrates and the tasting tongue as the perceptual subject. To quote, 'We may indeed speak of Socrates tasting sweet wine but only on the understanding that this Socrates cannot be the subject, just as the wine cannot be the object, of any other perception (159e160b). There is no more to this Socrates than his tasting tongue, and no more to that than is given by the statement that it is tasting this sweet wine now;' M. Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, p. 55. For a much less radical view cf. John McDowell, *Plato's Theaetetus*, pp. 152-4. For McDowell it is rather that the perceiving subject is differently qualified with each different perception.

¹³² cf. Myles Burnyeat, 'Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving', *Classical Quarterly* 26 (1976), pp. 31-2 and D. Bostock, *Plato's Theaetetus*, p. 66-7.

¹³³ 157b8-c2. Trans: 'And this applies in speaking both of the individual case and of many aggregated together -- such an aggregate, I mean, as people call 'man' or 'stone' or to which they give the names of different animals and sorts of things.'

II

Some Objections: Theaetetus 163b-165d

Once Socrates has unpacked Theaetetus' definition of knowledge (160e5), he goes on to articulate three problems, which, for the purposes of trying to discern the structure of the epistemic subject, are very telling: Firstly, should memory, as it does not involve perception (at least not directly), be regarded as involving knowledge or not?¹³⁴ Secondly, if someone has one eye covered, can we say that he knows and does not know in the same way as we would say that he sees and does not see?¹³⁵ And, finally, can one know dimly just as one is said to see dimly when an object is very far off in the distance?¹³⁶ All three of these issues bring to the surface problems or dilemmas which the exclusively single-tiered first-ordered episodic epistemological theory just espoused is incapable of accommodating.¹³⁷

The first objection stresses the need for a unified and persistent subject from the diachronic point of view. For the epistemological demands which the memory makes are that (i) the subject is able to store the content of his perceptions away and (ii) that same subject has the capacity to call this content up and compare it with present sensory input or perceptions. Memory and its content require a subject over time which is capable of performing second-order perceptions; a subject whose epistemic structure is multi-tiered.¹³⁸ But if the subject's structure is such that he is nothing over and above a series of disconnected perceptual events or episodes, memory will be something which this subject is unable to accommodate. For its structure is such that it will neither be able to store away the content of its perceptual episodes nor recall that content.

The second objection highlights another consequence of a completely fragmented single-tiered epistemic subject, this time from the synchronic point of view. Either one says that each eye constitutes a perceiving subject, in which case, these seeing eyes do not refer back to some unified subject, but instead are themselves the subjects, so that the thing in which they inhere by extension is in a sense simultaneously

¹³⁴ 163d4-5.

¹³⁵ 165b7-c2.

¹³⁶ 165d2-5.

¹³⁷ cf. D. Bostock, Plato's Theaetetus, pp. 86-89.

¹³⁸ cf. Plato's 'wax-tablet' account of memory in which the subject consciously compares one impression with another, 191c-196c.

seeing and not seeing. And as sense perception constitutes knowledge, this entity or individual in which the eyes reside can by extension be said both to know and not to know. Or one takes the view that covering one eye does not stop the perceiver from seeing. However, the latter interpretation requires some sort of unified perceptual consciousness over above the individual eyes and their respective perceptual episodes; a perceptual consciousness whose 'subjecthood' does not reside at the level of the eyes themselves. For if there were a unified subject to which the two eyes referred, that subject, regardless of seeing through one or two eyes, would still be said to be seeing.

Both of these objections highlight the need for some sort of unified consciousness which has a persistent identity. The first objection looks at matters from the diachronic perspective and the second from the synchronic. The third and final objection stresses the need for distinguishing between the purely mechanical side of things and some sort of independent consciousness over and above the mechanics of perceiving. Otherwise one will have to think of knowledge in terms of degrees. But as knowledge was spoken of earlier as something which is incorrigible, it will not admit of degrees.

What all three objections have in common is that they highlight the need for there to be some sort of persistent unified epistemic subject which resides on a different level from that of the individual senses; a subject to which all the latter refer and whose content can be properly reflected upon and assimilated.¹³⁹ In other words, we require a epistemic subject that is multi-tiered.

III

Refutation of Protagoras: Theaetetus 170a-172c

Socrates' first refutation of Protagoras which runs from 170a-172c is bipartite in structure: i) no one, including Protagoras, believes that the Measure doctrine is true, in which case the doctrine is true *for* no one.¹⁴⁰ iia) He believes it but no one else does, in

¹³⁹ Again, as discussed above with first and second-order perceptions, the relation between this cognitive subject and the various senses to which it relates will not be one of self-perception, since it will be the content of the senses and not the senses themselves that is under consideration.

¹⁴⁰ 170e7-171a1.

which case it is true *for* fewer people than those *for* whom it is false.¹⁴¹ iib) Protagoras has to accept as true the opinion of his opponent who does not accept the Measure doctrine; Protagoras has to accept as true the opinion that the Measure doctrine is false.¹⁴²

It is not necessary for our purposes to give a detailed account of each stage of the refutation. What is relevant, however, is the solipsistic position to which Protagoras' position leads, resulting, ultimately, in the demise of the coextensive relation between the subject and object. The source of Protagoras' undoing rests with his claim that the Measure doctrine is a universal truth.¹⁴³ That is, he thinks one can consistently make a universal and objective claim which states that everything is private.¹⁴⁴ The first part of this refutation exploits the fact that Protagoras has universalised his Measure doctrine and in so doing has made himself vulnerable to contradictory objective claims, such as that no one, not even Protagoras, believes the Measure doctrine.¹⁴⁵ By universalising his doctrine, Protagoras is bound to acknowledge the beliefs of others and, as a result, must at some stage accept their verdict.¹⁴⁶ The second part of the refutation presents the

¹⁴¹ 171a1-3.

¹⁴² 171a6-b2.

¹⁴³ 168b5-6. Of course, this account is by no means universally accepted. Sarah Waterlow, for example, disputes this approach in her paper, 'Protagoras and Inconsistency'. She takes the line that the Protagorean position is undermined by what she refers to as *factual relativism* and not logical inconsistency. Waterlow argues that it is not because Protagoras agrees with the view of his opponent that he is refuted. She maintains that 'x' can agree with 'y' without accepting the content of the belief held by 'y'. Instead her argument goes something like this: The truth of one's opinion or perception rests with the simple fact that it occurs. It is wrong to think that one is in a position to accept or reject anything. To quote, '... ; but that those who reject it [sc. Protagoras' theory] can have no reason even to consider accepting it. Protagoras rejects nothing that they assert in opposition. He cannot even reject any doubt in his own thoughts, should any arise, since that would imply that an appearance might be false. Nor can he hold that his external opponents might even be wrong. Thus an opponent confronting Protagoras' position confronts, so to speak, a dialectical nothing, offering no resistance.' S. Waterlow, 'Protagoras and Inconsistency', pp. 35-6. On Waterlow's account, it would seem that Protagoras is not even offering us a theory. Although I follow Burnyeat with respect to logical consistency, at the end of the day I think Waterlow is right with respect to the fact that one does end with a dialectical nothing. As I hope to show below, the reason for this dialectical nothing results from Protagoras' position ultimately leading to an extreme form of solipsism in which even the distinction between subject and objects -- their coextensive relation -- disintegrates.

¹⁴⁴ Myles Burnyeat states the problem in the following way: 'Isn't there something inherently paradoxical about someone asserting or believing that all truth is relative?' Myles Burnyeat, The Theaetetus of Plato, p. 30.

¹⁴⁵ cf. M. Burnyeat, 'Protagoras and Self Refutation in Plato's Theaetetus', p. 182.

¹⁴⁶ cf. E.N. Lee, "'Hoist with His Own Petard': Ironical and Comic Elements in Plato's Critique of Protagoras', Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos, edd. E.N. Lee, A.P.D. Mourelatos and R.M. Rorty (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. B.V., 1973), pp. 247-49. Lee compares Protagoras' account to a chess player who makes a move but refuses to take his hand off the piece, thereby both nullifying the move and playing the game.

denial of Protagoras' doctrine in a relativised form: It is true 'for' Protagoras but not true 'for' anyone else. However, Protagoras is still vulnerable because the claim 'x is true for y' does still express a truth, namely, 'x is true for y'. Regardless of whether the claim is relative or not, as long as it is assumed to be meaningful (as 'x is true for y' is) to that extent it is objective.¹⁴⁷ And to the extent that it is meaningful, it is public and not private property. Protagoras, if he is to be consistent with what he writes, must take on board the beliefs of his opponents.¹⁴⁸

However, is consistency something which even matters to Protagoras and his position? At this stage, Protagoras can either embrace the view of his opponents and abandon the Measure doctrine or ignore the objective demands of truth and pursue a course in which he is cut off not only from the world around him but ultimately also from himself. He chooses the latter:

καὶ εἰ αὐτίκα ἐντεῦθεν ἀνακύψει μέχρι τοῦ αὐχένος, πολλὰ ἂν ἐμέ
τε ἐλέγξας ληροῦντα, ὥς τὸ εἰκός, καὶ σὲ ὁμολογοῦντα, καταδύς ἂν
οἴχοιτο ἀποτρέχων. ἀλλ' ἡμῖν ἀνάγκη οἶμαι χρῆσθαι ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς
ὅποιοί τινές ἐσμεν καὶ τὰ δοκοῦντα ἀεὶ ταῦτα λέγειν.¹⁴⁹

There are two issues that this passage brings to the surface as far as Protagoras' position is concerned: the type of subject his position affords and the sort of activity of which that subject is capable.

Instead of joining in the argument and addressing what Socrates and Theodorus have to say about the Measure doctrine, Protagoras briefly appears as a fragmented entity, tosses out some utterances and quickly disappears before Socrates can properly address his remarks. We have a head by itself, lacking a body. Protagoras is not a whole integrated and unified person or subject.¹⁵⁰ Earlier on we spoke of seeing

¹⁴⁷ To quote John Passmore, 'The fundamental criticism of Protagoras can now be put thus: to engage in discourse at all he has to assert that something is the case'. John Passmore, *Philosophical Reasoning* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 61. Burnyeat invokes a similar principle, the principle of translation, which runs something like this: 'x is true for y' thus 'it is true that x is true for y'. Cf. M. Burnyeat, 'Protagoras and Self Refutation in Plato's Theaetetus', p. 193.

¹⁴⁸ I follow Burnyeat's argument that 'true' here means 'true for', for the following reasons: a) the qualified version from the first refutation onwards has been shown not to be harmless and b) Socrates in the midst of the third refutation actually refers to Protagoras' written doctrine. So it would be rather odd if Plato did have not the relativised version in mind. See Burnyeat, *ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁴⁹ 171d1-5. Trans: 'And if he were to stick up his head from below up until his neck just where we are, he would in likelihood convict me twenty times of talking nonsense, and show you up too for agreeing with me, before he ducked down to rush off again. But we have got to take ourselves as we are, I suppose, and go on saying the things which seem to us to be.'

¹⁵⁰ cf. M.M. McCabe, *Plato's Individuals*, pp. 276-80.

eyes and tasting tongues. Here we have another isolated part, a solitary head. The reason for Protagoras' part-like existence is due to the disconnected episodic structure his epistemology affords to the subject. The Measure doctrine, if it is still to be adhered to, only allows for disconnected parts, disconnected measures. If it were to deal with an integrated unified subject, that subject might be able to contradict itself. It might, for example, realise that a perception it had at t_1 is false when compared to a similar one at t_2 , or that one sense might contradict another, such as touch and sight with regard to the nature of the surface of a body. In that case, one sense (i.e. one measure) would be wrong and would not deserve the title of measure.

As regards the activity of the Protagorean subject, this brings us back to the question raised earlier about whether or not consistency even matters to Protagoras; whether Protagoras feels any obligation to respond to Socrates' refutation. Judging by the manner in which he pops in and out, the answer would seem to be no. But, again, this disregard for consistency of argument stems from the episodic nature of his subject. Because his subject is composed of disconnected momentary episodes, that subject cannot enter into a discussion or an argument.¹⁵¹ For to be able to do so presupposes that the subject has some sort of persistent identity, which enables it to formulate positions and follow them through. But if that subject is different from one instant or stage of the argument to the next, then it cannot be contradicted. To put it another way, consistency and inconsistency are rendered vacuous in relation to Protagoras' position. Thus the answer to the question raised earlier about whether Protagoras cares about consistency is an emphatic 'no'.

The episodic nature of Protagoras' position does not simply destroy the possibility of his entering into an argument with Socrates; its consequences are much more radical than that. His position destroys the very possibility of any sort of intelligible language.¹⁵² For if the subject is incapable of lasting but an instant, it will be

¹⁵¹ cf. S. Waterlow, 'Protagoras and Inconsistency', pp. 35-6. Earlier she was quoted as saying that Protagoras' opponent, when confronting Protagoras, encounters a dialectical nothing. Agreeing with this, I would add that it is in virtue of just that point, that it is irrelevant what Protagoras says or does because he is outside theory or debate. Waterlow finishes her article with the following insightful remark: 'For there is nothing that can lead him [sc. Protagoras] to alter, defend, reconsider or even reaffirm his own opinions, since all he encounters is the instantaneous concession of their truth.' It is in virtue of this intellectual paralysis that Protagoras takes the only avenue open, meaningless utterances.

¹⁵² cf. *Cratylus* 384c9-e4 where Hermogenes puts forward a view about naming which, like that of Protagoras' relativism, destroys truth, since the meaning of terms is reduced to the whims of the subject or

impossible for that subject to articulate thoughts in an intelligible manner, because to do so entails that the subject is able to put together something which has a complex intertwined structure, i.e. a judgement. But if the subject is constantly changing in this episodic manner, it will be incapable of persisting long enough to formulate a complex linguistic entity such as a proposition. At best this subject could blurt out meaningless atomic utterances. Consequently, Protagoras cannot enter into a dialogue with Socrates or anyone else, including himself. For dialogue, be it with oneself or someone else, presupposes the ability to communicate things in an intelligible manner through the medium of language to the listener. Thus, if Protagoras' position is allowed to stand, it is at the expense of having a coherent epistemic subject. Rather one is left with a subject which is cut off both from the world around it and from itself. Protagoras' subject is an entity which dissolves into a collection of instances incapable of performing any sort of intelligible activity. Ultimately, Protagoras' position is not even solipsistic because it does not have any world, be it private or public. It cannot enter into a *meaningful* relation -- such as coextensivity -- with anything. At best, the Protagorean subject is identical with itself in the most trivial and vacuous manner imaginable: It is whatever it is. In effect, it has ceased to be a subject.

The final result of this position, ironically like that of Parmenides, is that the epistemic subject and its world, i.e. its object, simply collapse into another. As with the Parmenidean account both the epistemic subject and thinking are rendered unintelligible and vacuous. They do not admit of a coextensive relation with one another. They are indistinguishable from one another, so that even the epistemological language of 'subject' and 'object' is inappropriate. As in Chapter I, here too we are left with one relation, trivial self-identity; a relation which is not unique to the epistemological domain. Thus, just as Parmenides' strong monism acted as the perfect foil to the final argument of Republic Bk. V, here the Protagorean position and the demise of the epistemic subject act as the perfect foil for Plato's account of the epistemic subject. For it is only after exploring the implications of such a position that Plato comes to formulate his account of the subject and its activity.

speaker.

IV

Plato's' Epistemic Subject: Theaetetus 184b-187a

Having finished with Protagoras and Heraclitus, Socrates next turns his attention to Theaetetus' definition (184b-187a). In the process of refuting Theaetetus, Socrates articulates the structure of the epistemic subject and its activity. The refutation begins by Socrates asking Theaetetus whether or not we perceive through or with our sensory powers or organs:¹⁵³

σκόπει γάρ· ἀπόκρισις ποτέρα ὀρθότερα, ᾧ ὁρῶμεν τοῦτο εἶναι
ὀφθαλμούς, ἢ δι' οὗ ὁρῶμεν, καὶ ᾧ ἀκούομεν ὦτα, ἢ δι' οὗ
ἀκούομεν;¹⁵⁴

Theaetetus rightly chooses 'through' (διὰ) over 'with' (ᾧ).¹⁵⁵ If it were not 'through' the sensory organs but 'with' them that we perceive, we would have a situation reminiscent of what we encountered earlier with Protagoras. The structure of the subject would be such that it is internally disconnected or fragmented. Each sense would be completely isolated from the others, with the result that there would be five different perceptual acts occurring within one body that were in no way unified or centrally coordinated. However, the present account would be an advance over the Protagorean position to the extent that the individual sense retained an identity over time, allowing for a coextensive relation with their object.¹⁵⁶ Still, the only relation the various senses would have to one another is that they happen all to reside in the same body, i.e. in close physical proximity.¹⁵⁷ There would not be an epistemological relation between the many senses or the senses taken individually in relation to the horse in which they were contained. Rather their relation to one another and the wooden horse would be the sort of relation one finds in the domain of physics, a plurality of discrete self-identical bodies in a physical container. The wooden horse itself, therefore, would not be an epistemic

¹⁵³ For a discussion of how Plato slips between talking of organs and powers, see Burnyeat, 'Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving', p. 41.

¹⁵⁴ 184c5-7. Trans: 'Think now. Is it more correct to say that the eyes are that with which we see or through which we see? Do we hear with the ears or through the ears?'

¹⁵⁵ 184c8-9.

¹⁵⁶ 184d1. Burnyeat speaks of the wooden horse analogy as Protagoras' theory without the flux, see Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, p. 55.

¹⁵⁷ The wooden horse, no doubt an allusion to the Trojan Horse, is a very well chosen image because it is not, so to speak, what it appears to be to us, viz. an intrinsically unified entity as opposed to a mere conglomeration of autonomous entities. I say an appropriate image because it was not what the Trojans thought either, viz. their destruction as opposed a new beginning.

subject, it would be a ‘thing’ which contained other ‘things’:

Δεινὸν γάρ που, ὦ παῖ, εἰ πολλαί τινες ἐν ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐν δουρείοις
ἵπποις αἰσθήσεις ἐγκάθηνται, ἀλλὰ μὴ εἰς μίαν τινὰ ιδέαν, εἴτε
ψυχὴν εἴτε ὅτι δεῖ καλεῖν, πάντα ταῦτα συντείνει, ἥ διὰ τούτων οἶον
ὀργάνων αἰσθανόμεθα ὅσα αἰσθητά.¹⁵⁸

Consequently, the awareness of the perceptual content would occur at the level of the senses themselves. There would be no focal point on which to converge. Thus the horse itself in which these various senses inhere, as they are not intrinsically connected to that horse, would not be aware of the perceptual content of the various senses. The ‘subjecthood’ of the perceptions would exist at the level of each of the five senses. So the ‘with’ reading falls short because it is still too close to the Protagorean position in that it offers us a completely fragmented subject. The identity of each sense over time is certainly an improvement on the Protagorean position but not sufficient to enable the horse in Plato’s analogy to enter into an epistemological relation with the world around it, i.e. to be an epistemic subject.¹⁵⁹

By advancing the ‘through’ interpretation over the ‘with’ reading, Socrates paves the way for a perceptual focal point upon which all the senses converge; a focal point that stands over the five senses themselves, which can unify and co-ordinate their disparate data. As Socrates put it, it would be a very strange or even terrible thing (δεινόν), if there were not one thing, be it the soul or whatever, upon which all the senses converged. If this were not the case, it would be impossible to account for the unity of our perceptual experience because we would have five different subjects inhering in us, each doing its own thing. But as the ‘through’ reading allows for a point of convergence, the autonomy of the individual senses is undermined and the beginnings of a unified and coherent epistemic subject can be discerned.¹⁶⁰ Our next task therefore is to see how this focal point, this subject, stands in relation to the five senses and what exactly is its own activity.

Socrates now turns to the demarcation and limiting of the senses’ scope.

¹⁵⁸ 184d1-5. Trans: ‘Yes my son. It would be very a strange thing, I must say, if there were a number of senses sitting inside us as if we were Wooden Horses, and there were not some single form, soul or whatever one ought to call it, to which all these converge -- something with which, through the senses, as if they were instruments, we perceive all that is perceptible.’

¹⁵⁹ cf. Burnyeat on the question of ‘subjecthood’ with the senses, ‘Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving’, p. 38.

¹⁶⁰ Burnyeat refers to this as the first account of a unified consciousness in the history of western philosophy. See Burnyeat, ‘Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving’, p. 49.

Firstly, he argues that all the things which are perceived through the sense organs belong to the body.¹⁶¹ Secondly, each sense has its own proper object, which is exclusive or unique to that sense. Thus one cannot perceive colour through the tongue or sweetness through the eye. Given the bodily nature of the objects and the mutual exclusivity of the senses, Socrates asks in virtue of what then can someone think (διανοῆ) something which is common to more than one of the senses:

Εἴ τι ἄρα περὶ ἀμφοτέρων διανοῆ, οὐκ ἂν διὰ γε τοῦ ἑτέρου ὀργάνου,
οὐδ' αὖ διὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου περὶ ἀμφοτέρων αἰσθάνοι' ἂν.¹⁶²

For he takes it to be an empirical fact that the subject is aware of things over and above the proper sensory inputs of each sense. The list includes things such as being, non-being, self-identity, singularity, plurality, likeness, difference and whatever else might be thought of as common to the objects of the various senses.¹⁶³ The argument can be rendered as follows: i) The various senses can only account for their proper objects, they cannot account for things which are common to all the senses; ii) the subject does apprehend or is aware of things in addition to the proper sense objects, it is aware of these common things, the κοινά. Hence these common things must be apprehended by the subject in virtue of something over and above the five senses. The bodily processes of the five senses are not sufficient to account for all that goes on in sense perception. What this means is that the subject must have an additional faculty or capacity unique to itself which enables it to apprehend such common things as, for example, being. And they, the common things, must be perceived or apprehended by the soul in a different manner from that of the physical component of sense perception, since there is no bodily component involved:

Ἀλλὰ μὰ Δία, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἔγωγε οὐκ ἂν ἔχοιμι εἰπεῖν, πλὴν γ' ὅτι
μοι δοκεῖ τὴν ἀρχὴν οὐδ' εἶναι τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν τούτοις ὄργανον
ἴδιον ὥσπερ ἐκείνοις, ἀλλ' αὐτὴ δι' αὐτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ κοινὰ μοι
φαίνεται περὶ πάντων ἐπισκοπεῖν.¹⁶⁴

The exact manner of apprehension which is proper to the soul Socrates has already

¹⁶¹ 184e4-6.

¹⁶² 185a4-6. Trans: 'Then suppose you think something about both; you can't possibly be having a perception about both, either through one of these instruments or the other?'

¹⁶³ 185c9-d1.

¹⁶⁴ 185d7-e2. Trans: 'But I couldn't possibly say Socrates. All I can tell you is that it doesn't seem to me that for these things there is any special instrument at all, as there are for the others. It seems to me that in investigating the common features of everything the soul functions through itself.'

touched on at the outset of his refutation of Theaetetus' definition, viz. thinking (διανοή). The significance of all this is that Socrates has now clearly demarcated sense perception from thinking. The latter is something the soul carries out by itself (αὐτὴ δι' αὐτῆς). Thus the complete picture of sense perception involves the bodily processes on the one side, the raw sense data, and the soul's activity on the other, i.e. its employment of κοινά. By carefully separating the physical component from the mental, Socrates has allotted a unique activity to the soul. And given that the soul has its own activity, there is no reason why this activity of the soul should be confined to sense perception. Hence Socrates goes on to remark that the soul can apprehend things in one of two ways, either through bodily powers or through itself:

πρὸς δὲ τῷ καλῷ εὖ ἐποίησάς με μάλα συχνοῦ λόγου ἀπαλλάξας, εἰ φαίνεται σοι τὰ μὲν αὐτὴ δι' αὐτῆς ἢ ψυχὴ ἐπισκοπεῖν, τὰ δὲ διὰ τῶν τοῦ σώματος δυνάμεων.¹⁶⁵

In either case the soul acts upon the content or object before itself. Sense perception can no longer be sufficiently explained in terms of bodily processes alone. When the subject perceives objects, the common things are employed, such as being: 'x is red or sweet'. The mind thinks about its content, whether this content is derived through the senses or from the soul itself.

The senses themselves on this reading are completely passive and incapable of acting on their objects. They act simply as means of transmission of raw sense data.¹⁶⁶ They are in no way judgmental. Once the soul has received these data, it then

¹⁶⁵ 185e5-7. Trans: 'And besides being handsome you have done me a good turn; you have saved me a vast amount of talk if it seems to you that, while the soul considers some things through bodily powers, there are others which it considers alone and through itself.'

¹⁶⁶ For a different interpretation of the senses' role, see J.M. Cooper, 'Plato on Sense Perception and Knowledge: Theaetetus 184-186', *Phronesis* 15 (1970). Cooper takes the view that sense perception differs from thinking only in degree of complexity. Sense perception is only capable of immediate classification, whereas thinking is much more complex. It compares, contrasts and judges. Sense perception, on his reading, labels things which involves only a minimal amount of conceptualisation. In other words, when the eye sees red it implicitly says that the colour before it is red and not yellow and thus utilises such things as memory and comparison (pp.133-4). Cooper defends his interpretation on the grounds that sense perception, as it were, uses the κοινά implicitly and does not explicitly say to itself that that thing is red. According to him, it is only the explicit discernment which qualifies as διάνοια (pp. 132-33).

However, there are certain problems with Cooper's 'labelling' interpretation. Firstly, one must bear in mind the course of the journey which has brought us thus far. The problem with αἴσθησις prior to the κοινά passage was that it was ambiguous whether sense perception was active or passive; whether it was intrinsically judgmental or not. Socrates tried to overcome that problem by being very specific about whether we perceive 'with' or 'through' our senses. He stressed the need for precision on this point (184c1-5). The reason for such precision is to avoid any sort of ambiguity about whether sense perception strictly speaking is judgmental or not. The sensory powers or organs act simply as a means. Given such a limited function, Cooper's interpretation becomes counter-productive, because it blurs the precision which

articulates propositions such as ‘x is’ or ‘x is different from y’. The significance of this is not simply that we have an epistemic subject which unifies, differentiates and co-ordinates the raw sense data which it receives via the five senses but that the soul’s own proper activity has been clearly demarcated. Let us now focus on this activity which is unique to the soul, the epistemic subject. For once the subject’s activity is clearly in focus, so too will be the identity and nature of that subject.

In the case of sense perception, the soul’s activity was seen to be the employment of the κοινά in relation to the sense data. That is, the soul’s activity in that context was to co-ordinate the disparate phenomenal data received through the five senses and form judgements about those data. But what does the soul do when it is not passing judgement on sense data? It would seem, given what Socrates says, that the soul’s activity, when not making direct judgements about phenomenal objects, consists in comparing and contrasting the judgements themselves and making complex calculations about them:

Τὴν δέ γε οὐσίαν καὶ ὅτι ἐστὸν καὶ τὴν ἐναντιότητα πρὸς ἀλλήλω
καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν αὖ τῆς ἐναντιότητος αὐτῇ ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπανιοῦσα καὶ
συμβάλλουσα πρὸς ἄλληλα κρίνειν πειρᾶται ἡμῖν.¹⁶⁷

Socrates is after. Cooper wants sense perception to be able to perform ‘immediate classification’. But classification by its very definition is not immediate. So if we are to attribute it to our sensory powers, the διά reading is going to have to be altered to some extent. For one of the functions of this reading was to ensure that all classification is done by that part of the soul which thinks. Sense perception never says ‘this is red as opposed to yellow’ or even ‘red not yellow’ but just ‘red’, without recourse to memory or comparison, implicitly or explicitly. To talk about the senses implicitly comparing and classifying things, is another way of saying that the senses are implicitly discursive or rational. But as quoted earlier, Socrates explicitly sets out the two scenarios which involve the thinking soul: i) the soul can think things by itself or ii) it can think things with the assistance of the sensory powers. In the latter case, which is relevant for our purposes, what one has is the coming together of two fundamentally different things.

But does rejecting Cooper’s interpretation on this point necessitate that sense perception is not able to make out any differences among its proper objects? Can sight *qua* sense perception notice the difference between red and yellow, or is it thinking that does this? A consequence of perceiving ‘through’ the senses is that they act as the perfect medium. As a result, each of the sensory powers is affected differently by different objects. Hence different coloured things affect the visual medium, viz. the eye, differently. So, there is no need to think that if we reject immediate classification at the level of the sensory powers we are left with indistinguishable perceptual masses. That is to say, it is not the case that sight sees an indistinguishable mass of colours and is saved simply by the classification of the thinking soul. Sense perception does not have to reflect on its objects as such to experience the difference. Without falling into Cooper’s camp one can say yes, sense perception does perceive a red thing and a yellow thing as having two different properties but only because they, the two properties, affect it differently. The difficulty with Cooper’s interpretation is that the notion of ‘labelling’ attributes too active a role to sense perception. On the present reading, sense perception is purely passive (cf. Burnyeat, ‘Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving’, p. 42, n.38). Thus Socrates refers to our sensory experiences as affections (παθήματα, 186c2). However, their affections can only be articulated by the soul for it has access to concepts which allow it pass judgement.

¹⁶⁷ 186b6-9. Trans: ‘But as regards their being -- the fact that they are -- their opposition to one another, and the being, again, of this opposition, the matter is different. Here the soul itself attempts to reach a decision for us by rising to compare them with one another’.

The latter activity is something which it only masters after a long and arduous development:

τὰ δὲ περὶ τούτων ἀναλογίσματα πρὸς τε οὐσίαν καὶ ὠφέλειαν μόγῃς
καὶ ἐν χρόνῳ διὰ πολλῶν πραγμάτων καὶ παιδείας παραγίνεται οἷς
ἂν καὶ παραγίγνηται,¹⁶⁸

The subject's activity therefore consists in performing complex judgements about the common terms and judgements which it made about sense data:

Ἐν μὲν ἄρα τοῖς παθήμασιν οὐκ ἔνι ἐπιστήμη, ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ ἐκείνων
συλλογισμῷ.¹⁶⁹

In other words, its activity is to syllogise (συλλογισμός) or reason about the judgements (perceptual or otherwise) it makes, deducing in turn further conclusions. This, the syllogistic activity, is what is unique about the epistemic subject. Only through it, can the epistemic subject be properly understood. So, for example, the need for a persistent identity becomes obvious when one considers what the syllogistic activity involves: If the epistemic subject is to compare and contrast various judgements and arrive at intelligent consistent conclusions based upon them, that subject must be able to maintain its identity throughout the process. Secondly, this syllogistic nature is also indicative of just how complex the subject is. For the epistemic subject, in addition to being a unified entity with a continuous identity, is also an interwoven set of complex beliefs. That is, the subject is a complex structure of organised beliefs which originates from an examination of the judgements which it makes. So only when this syllogising activity is taken into account can we get a hold of what the epistemic subject is *per se*, since that is what marks it off from everything else. This capacity is what distinguishes it from the world and the objects in that world. Thus it is this notion of syllogising in which the identity of the epistemic subject lies.

¹⁶⁸ 186c2-5. Trans: 'But calculations regarding their being and their advantageousness come, when they do, only as a result of a long and arduous development, involving a good deal of trouble and education.' Given that Socrates qualifies this judgmental process by stating that it is not something which animals and infants are capable of but rather it requires a long and arduous education, I think is indicative of the fact that Socrates does not have in mind direct perceptions of sense data but rather more removed analysis about those judgements. That is, now he is examining the nature of the reasoning process itself.

¹⁶⁹ 186d2-3. Trans: 'Then knowledge is to be found not in the affections but in the process of reasoning about them.'

V

Talking to Oneself: Theaetetus 189e-190a

Having a clear sense of what Plato's epistemic subject looks like, i.e. that part of us that judges and syllogises, what sort of relation to itself, if any, does this subject enjoy? Can this subject relate to itself *qua* object? Can, as required by self-intellection, this subject be its own object? At 189eff. in the midst of his attempt to explain what false judgement is, Socrates offers Theaetetus the following account of how the epistemic subject thinks (διάνοια):

Λόγον ὃν αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἡ ψυχὴ διεξέρχεται περὶ ὧν ἂν σκοπῇ. ὥς γε μὴ εἰδὼς σοι ἀποφαίνομαι. τοῦτο γάρ μοι ἰνδάλλεται διανοουμένη οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ διαλέγεσθαι, αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν ἐρωτῶσα καὶ ἀποκρινομένη, καὶ φάσκουσα καὶ οὐ φάσκουσα. ὅταν δὲ ὀρίσασα, εἴτε βραδύτερον εἴτε καὶ ὀξύτερον ἐπάξασα, τὸ αὐτὸ ἤδη φῇ καὶ μὴ διστάζῃ, δόξαν ταύτην τίθεμεν αὐτῆς. ὥστ' ἔγωγε τὸ δοξάζειν λέγειν καλῶ καὶ τὴν δόξαν λόγον εἰρημένον, οὐ μέντοι πρὸς ἄλλον οὐδὲ φωνῇ, ἀλλὰ σιγῇ πρὸς αὐτόν.¹⁷⁰

The epistemic subject, with the assistance of language, is capable of having a certain sort of relation with itself: λόγον ὃν αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἡ ψυχὴ. It speaks and syllogises to *itself* about things. Having a λόγον and syllogising is the manner in which the subject digests things. Yet such a relation to oneself, i.e. talking or syllogising, does not account for self-intellection, if the latter entails that the subject have itself as an object like any of its other objects. For syllogising explains the *method* by which the subject grasps objects but it does not account for how the subject might be its own object. By talking to oneself *about* objects, the subject is not directly and transparently reflected back onto itself as an object. Reflexivity is not a property or attribute of the syllogistic act. Thus, there is no reason to expect that the epistemic subject would see itself -- at least as a first-order object -- in performing its proper function.

The account of the subject which Plato offers does not accommodate an account of self-intellection because it is just that, an account of the subject *qua* subject.

¹⁷⁰ 189e6-190a6. Trans: 'A talk which the soul has with itself about the objects under its consideration. Of course, I am only telling you my idea in all ignorance; but this is the kind of picture I have of it. It seems to me that the soul when it thinks is simply carrying on a discussion in which it asks itself questions and answers them itself, affirms and denies. And when it arrives at something definite, either by a gradual process or a sudden leap, when it affirms one thing consistently and without divided counsel, we call this its judgement. So, in my view, to judge is to make a statement, and a judgement is a statement which is not addressed to another person or spoken aloud, but silently addressed to oneself.' For similar sorts of analogies cf. Sophist 264a-b and, perhaps, Philebus 38e-39a.

Plato is interested exclusively in setting out what the epistemic subject is and the method which it employs in order to understand the objects in the world. Thus he is not interested in whether or not the subject itself can be an object like the other objects in the world. Setting out the identity conditions which constitute an account of the epistemic subject do not require that he do so. He is interested in what it is to be an epistemic subject. And as the Theaetetus is a dialogue which never actually offers an account of what it is to be an intelligible object, the fact that he does not consider whether or not the epistemic subject can be its own object should come as no surprise. Everytime an intelligible object is brought before this subject, that object comes undone, and so the dialogue ends in *aporia*. Nonetheless, this does not negate the fact that the dialogue offers a very rich and active account of what it is to be an epistemic subject.

In Chapter II, I argued that Plato has an account of how the epistemic subject and object are related to one another. In the Theaetetus, he gives a clear account of what it is to be a subject -- a necessary component for understanding both what the intellect is and offering a coherent theory of self-intellection -- but at a price. The side of the object has been eclipsed. There is no way to explain how our epistemic subject might qualify as an object, which it must if a theory of self-intellection is to be feasible, since the Theaetetus does not seem to allow for any objects. Thus this chapter might have taken us a step further inasmuch as we have a rich account of what it is to be an epistemic subject, but it is an isolated subject. We need an account of the subject which will also allow for a coherent account of what it is to be an intelligible object. Without such an account, a theory of self-intellection is impossible, since it entails that the subject have an object, itself.

IV

Aristotle on the Epistemic Subject's Relation to its Object in De Anima

Thus far we have witnessed the obliteration of the epistemic subject and its object as a result of the strict identity thesis of Parmenides' strong monism (Chapter I), the reinstatement of the subject and object as distinct and discernible *relata* which enjoyed a coextensive relation (Chapter II), and an account of the subject *per se* in the Theaetetus (Chapter III). Now I want to turn to Aristotle's De Anima, a text which, arguably, is the natural successor to the Theaetetus. For both texts concentrate on developing the structure of the relation between the epistemic subject and its object(s) (De Anima 3.1-2 and Theaetetus 184b-187c). Both examine the issue of proper objects and the manner in which they relate to the subject. However, unlike the Theaetetus, Aristotle's De Anima does present the reader with a positive account of intelligible objects. For the difficulty, as it emerged in the last chapter, was that the account of the epistemic subject was such that it did not lend itself to explaining how that subject could have a coherent relation to objects. Yet a theory of self-intellection, if it is to suffice, requires more than just an account of the subject alone. It requires *both* an account of how it is that that subject relates to its objects and, more significantly, how it is that the subject can actually be the object of such a relation; how it can be its own object. Thus my next step is to examine the epistemic subject, this time with a view to seeing how it relates to intelligible objects. Only when that relation is disclosed, will it be clear whether and how the epistemic subject can be its own intelligible object; how it is that νοῦς can be its own νοητόν.

To understand the Aristotelian account of νοῦς, it is necessary to have a clear conception of the type of relation νοῦς' sister faculty, αἴσθησις, has both towards its objects and itself. For the faculty of νοῦς appears, at least *prima facie*, to have a structure which in many ways mirrors that of αἴσθησις.¹⁷¹ Thus it is essential to have a

¹⁷¹ cf. De Anima 429a15-18 (Hereafter abbreviated as D.A.). Or at least that is the way in which Aristotle

clear sense of the of sort relation that αἴσθησις enjoys with its objects and whether or not, given this relation, any form of self-apprehension or self-perception can be attributed to this faculty. Having outlined the aisthetic account, I will then turn to the νοῦς itself and explore the relation it has with its proper objects, the νοητά, and see whether such a relation lends itself to a theory of self-intellection.

I Perception: De Anima 3.2

In D.A. 3.2, Aristotle offers us a very elaborate description of what the perceptual act involves. He tells us that the activity of the object, the perceptible, and the subject, the perceiver, are one (μία), but their essence or being (τὸ εἶναι) is different:

ἡ δὲ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ ἐνέργεια καὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἡ αὐτὴ μὲν ἐστὶ καὶ μία, τὸ δ' εἶναι οὐ τὸ αὐτὸ αὐταῖς.¹⁷²

But what does it mean to say that their ἐνέργεια is one? Why should we not think of there being two actualities? In the case of hearing, for example, we have two things, that which makes the noise and that which hears the noise.¹⁷³ Aristotle's response is as follows:

ὅταν δ' ἐνεργῇ τὸ δυνάμενον ἀκούειν καὶ ψοφῇ τὸ δυνάμενον ψοφεῖν, τότε ἡ κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἀκοὴ ἅμα γίνεται καὶ ὁ κατ' ἐνέργειαν ψόφος, ὧν εἴποιεν ἂν τις τὸ μὲν εἶναι ἄκουσιν τὸ δὲ ψόφησιν.¹⁷⁴

The perceptual ἐνέργεια is one numerically because, if one were to count the number of activities taking place, there would only be one. The fact that the activity consists of two components -- that which it hears and that which makes the noise -- does not make it more than one numerically. However, by the same token, simply because there is only one activity, it does not follow that that activity does not consist of two components.

treats them.

¹⁷² 425b26-27. Trans: 'The activity of the sensible object and that of the percipient sense is one and the same activity and yet the distinction between their being remains.' All Aristotelian texts, unless stated otherwise, are taken from the Oxford Classical Texts. Translations of Aristotle are loosely based upon Hamlyn's and those contained in McKeon. Aristotle, De Anima: Books II and III translated with introduction and notes by D.W. Hamlyn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) and Aristotle, The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. with introduction by R. McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

¹⁷³ cf. Hamlyn, De Anima: Books II and III, p. 124.

¹⁷⁴ 425b29-426a1. Trans: 'But when that which can hear is active, and that which can sound is sounding, then the actual hearing takes place at the same time as the actual sound, and one might call these, the one listening, the other sounding.'

Rather, the account of the ἐνέργεια is such that it must refer to both of these components. For the ἐνέργεια of the sounding not only entails that there is an object which makes a sound but that that sound is heard by that which is capable of hearing sounds. Likewise, the act of hearing, if it is to be realised, entails that there is a sound to be heard. The sounding and hearing are simultaneous, they coincide with one another; hence when the actual sound ceases, so does the actual hearing of that sound.¹⁷⁵ One could view the activity of sounding from either the perspective of that which makes the sound or from that which hears the sound.

The road analogy from Physics 3.3 proves insightful for two reasons in this context:

... οὐδ' εἰ τὸ ποιεῖν καὶ πάσχειν τὸ αὐτό ἐστίν, μὴ μέντοι ὥστε τὸν λόγον εἶναι ἓνα τὸν <τὸ> τί ἦν εἶναι λέγοντα, οἷον ὡς λώπιον καὶ ἱμάτιον, ἀλλ' ὡς ἡ ὁδὸς ἢ Θήβηθεν Ἀθήναζε καὶ Ἀθήνηθεν εἰς Θήβας, ...¹⁷⁶

(i) It illustrates how there could be one thing, i.e. one road, numerically, while (ii) emphasising how that one thing has or makes reference to two components, Thebes and Athens. On this analogy, there is only one *actual* road which can be described in either of the two ways: i) the road from Thebes to Athens or ii) the road from Athens to Thebes. So too in the case of the fully actualised perceptual act, there is only one perceptual ἐνέργεια which can be described or understood from different perspectives: the perspective of the thing making noise or the perspective of the thing which hears the noise. What is crucial is that the ἐνέργεια, which is one numerically, make some reference to the two constituents involved in the activity, in the same way as a full description of the road has to make reference to both Athens and Thebes.

The road analogy, however, is ill-suited for our purposes in this respect. It expresses -- forgetting about Athens and Thebes -- the logical relation of coextensivity and not a causal relation. For the point of origin and final destination joined by the road are coextensively related, they do not act upon one another, one does not affect the

¹⁷⁵ D.A. 426a18.

¹⁷⁶ Physics 202b11-14. Trans: '... even if to act and be acted upon are one and the same, provided they are not the same in respect of the account that states their essence (as raiment and dress), but are the same in the sense in which the road from Thebes to Athens and the road from Athens to Thebes are the same, ...'

other.¹⁷⁷ The audible object and perceiving subject of that object, on the other hand, are causally related in such a way that one acts upon the other. So the perceiver and the object of perception are different in being or essence (τό εἶναι) in that on one side, the object making the noise, acts, and the other, the hearer, is affected, i.e. is the patient.

Aristotle amplifies this notion of patient and agent. Staying with the example of hearing and sounding, the audible object has as its essence not only the capacity to make a noise but also to be heard. This is the second actuality of the object *qua* sounding. The perceiver on the other hand *qua* hearer has as its essence not simply the capacity to hear, its first actuality, but also actually hearing the audible thing.¹⁷⁸ The difference between the two essences as such is that one, the audible thing, in virtue of being in a certain state, affects certain things, viz. potential hearers. But it itself is incapable of being affected in the same way as the potential hearer. It cannot, under its present description, hear. It is *sensible*, not *sensitive*.¹⁷⁹

Given the different sorts of essences in play, one can see why in perception the affection is not, as with contrariety (which we shall look at shortly), of a reciprocal nature. But does all this entail that the audible object does not undergo any change whatsoever when it is heard as opposed to, say, just making a sound which is not heard? Yes and no. It does not undergo any qualitative change (ἀλλοίωσις) but it does undergo a *quasi* change in the sense that it is more fully actualised by being heard, as opposed to making a sound which is unheard. Thus when it is heard its being (or essence) is fully, not partially, realised.

In contrast to this, the essence of the hearer, in virtue of having a certain disposition, is to be affected by audible things. That is, its essence is to be passive. It is *sensitive* and, as a result, has as its essence to undergo a certain type of affection, viz. a qualitative change (ἀλλοίωσις).¹⁸⁰ For that is what having a sensitive soul entails.¹⁸¹ And in virtue of its passivity, the perceiver is the *locus* in which the ἐνέργεια will

¹⁷⁷ Obviously, such a logical relation has nothing to do with Athens and Thebes themselves. They are purely coincidental to this coextensive relation.

¹⁷⁸ cf. *DA*. 412b18-21. Here Aristotle says that if the soul were an eye, its essence (οὐσία) would be sight.

¹⁷⁹ *DA*. 415b24-25.

¹⁸⁰ *DA*. 415b24.

¹⁸¹ *DA*. 415b25.

actually occur.¹⁸² Hence it is not essential that the sort of agent with which we are dealing be moved when acting on the patient: διὸ οὐκ ἀνάγκη τὸ κινεῖν κινεῖσθαι.¹⁸³

What is the import of saying perceptibles cause the sense of the perceiver to undergo some sort of qualitative change (ἀλλοίωσις)? The sense receives the sensible forms of the perceptibles without the matter: τῶν αἰσθητῶν εἰδῶν ἄνευ τῆς ὕλης.¹⁸⁴ That is, in the perceptual act the perceiver becomes *like* the perceptible in question *qua* sensible form. So, in the case of sight, the seeing faculty in some way takes on the colour of the object (ὡς κεχρωμάτισται)¹⁸⁵ and so acquires the same sensible form.¹⁸⁶ The objects of perception therefore, (in virtue of *actually* having a particular form) determine the perceiver's perceptual content, by determining its form. Such an account of αἴσθησις, as we have it so far, could therefore justifiably be called *object oriented*. For we are looking at a causal relation which consists of subjects and first-order object acting upon those subjects, assimilating the latter to themselves.

II

Affection:

De Generatione et Corruptione 1.7 & De Anima 2.5

If the perceiving subject is affected by the perceptible object, and if intellection is analogous to perception, a few remarks about the Aristotelian account of affection are in order.

According to De Generatione et Corruptione 1.7, any sort of affection (πάθος or τὸ πάσχειν) has as necessary conditions both likeness and difference between that

¹⁸² This is what Hamlyn correctly refers to as Aristotle's general dictum. Hamlyn, De Anima: Books II and III, p. 124. I say 'correctly refers' because it enunciates a general causal principle of Aristotle's which is the mover and the moved are one as far as the number of events are concerned, assuming one is counting, and that the event is lodged in the moved and not the mover. This, of course, is crucial for Aristotle, otherwise his unmoved mover will be in danger of being moved.

¹⁸³ D.A. 426a5-6. One must remember that for Aristotle all παθή are κινήσεις but not vice versa.

¹⁸⁴ D.A. 424a18-19. Also cf. 427a9.

¹⁸⁵ Although it is not directly relevant for my purposes, it must be noted that the manner in which one interprets the ὡς is open to great debate. Richard Sorabji interprets this to mean that the sense organ undergoes a literal physiological change, whereas Myles Burnyeat maintains that there is only a *quasi* change. See R. Sorabji, 'Body and Soul in Aristotle', Philosophy 49 (1974), 63-89, 'Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle's Theory of Sense Perception', Aristotle's De Anima, edd. by M.C. Nussbaum and A.O. Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) pp. 194-255 and M. Burnyeat, 'Is an Aristotelian philosophy of mind still credible?', Aristotle's De Anima, edd. by M.C. Nussbaum and A.O. Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 15-26.

¹⁸⁶ D.A. 425b22.

which affects and that which is affected. Generally speaking Aristotle maintains that body, by its nature, affects body, colour affects colour and so on with other things of the same kind:

πέφυκε γὰρ σῶμα μὲν ὑπὸ σώματος, χυμὸς δ' ὑπὸ χυμοῦ, χρῶμα δ' ὑπὸ χρώματος πάσχειν, ὅλως δὲ τό ὁμογενὲς ὑπὸ τοῦ ὁμογενοῦς.¹⁸⁷

On the other hand, it is not the case that things which are the same as one another in all respects can affect each other. For something cannot become what it already is, since it already is what it is.¹⁸⁸ That is, it cannot take on the form, sensible (as we had it in the previous section) or otherwise, which it already *actually* has.

Now as G.C. pertains to the generation and perishability of sensible substances (περὶ δὲ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς)¹⁸⁹ and is not specifically tailored to the epistemological arena, one cannot expect everything that Aristotle says about affection to be applicable to perceptual and intellectual affection. So, for example, the structure of affection here is one in which things are alike in γένος but contrary in εἶδος and, as a result of this contrariety, they act on each other in a reciprocal fashion.¹⁹⁰ Each contrary, and this need not only mean the extremes, assimilates its contrary counterpart to itself.¹⁹¹ The hot thing *qua* agent heats and the cool thing *qua* agent cools. Yet in performing such an act, the agent is affected reciprocally by the patient. For as the cold thing cools the hot thing, it itself is warmed and *vice versa*.

Despite the fact that Aristotle, in G.C., is looking at the relation between two physical bodies within the domain of physics, such a combination, with some modification, goes right to the heart of the sort of relation which is required for self-intellection. 'Likeness' will obviously be too weak a relation but nonetheless, the epistemic subject, if it is to be an object which is capable of affecting the subject, it must in *some sense* be both different from and like (or in the context of self-intellection the 'same' as) the subject. In Aristotelian epistemology, if something is going to affect

¹⁸⁷ De Generatione et Corruptione 323b32-324a1 (Hereafter abbreviated as G.C.). Trans: 'For it is by nature that body is affected by body, flavour by flavour, colour by colour, and so in general what belongs to any kind by a member of the same kind.' The Greek in this passage is taken from the Loeb edition, On Sophistical Refutation, On Coming-To-Be and Passing-Away, On the Cosmos, translated by E.S. Forster and D.J. Furley (London: Loeb Classical Library. William Heinemann Ltd, 1955).

¹⁸⁸ G.C. 323b21-22.

¹⁸⁹ G.C. 314a1.

¹⁹⁰ G.C. 324a5-9.

¹⁹¹ G.C. 324a11-14.

something else, there is going to have to be something in common between that which affects and that which is affected, and self-intellection is no exception.¹⁹² Now, if the epistemic subject and its object are coextensive, they are not contraries, and the subject and its object will not affect each other in the reciprocal manner of contraries. Otherwise, the agent, the perceived object, would be affected during the perceptual act in a reciprocal manner. But it would be absurd to maintain, for example, that in my seeing a coloured thing, the coloured thing itself undergoes a similar or analogous sort of change by virtue of my seeing it.¹⁹³

However, what does carry over from the domain of physics to the epistemological domain is the need for some sort of likeness and difference between agent and patient. For without these notions, the epistemic subject's affection could not be explained. What is more, saying things are alike in genus but contrary in species is not adequate for the present epistemological purposes. Aristotle, appreciating this point, makes the following qualification at D.A. 2.5:

οὐκ ἔστι δ' ἀπλοῦν οὐδὲ τὸ πάσχειν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν φθορά τις ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐναντίου, τὸ δὲ σωτηρία μᾶλλον τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐντελεχείᾳ ὄντος, καὶ ὁμοίου οὕτως ὡς δύναμις ἔχει πρὸς ἐντελέχειαν.¹⁹⁴

This qualified account, while satisfying the likeness/difference requirement, can accommodate epistemic affection. To speak of something as a certain sort of capacity that is capable of being realised by a certain sort of object is conditional upon likeness and difference in this sense: The perceiver or thinker -- that which is affected -- is potentially *like* the object of affection and thus is capable of being realised by it but prior to this realisation it is still actually *unlike* that object. However, once it has been

¹⁹² Aristotle cites the example of how whiteness cannot be affected by a line and vice versa, because this is an instance in which there is nothing in common. In this discussion, it is assumed that we are speaking in terms of non-coincidental affection, G.C. 323b24-27.

¹⁹³ However, this is not to say that the perceived object does not undergo any change whatsoever. For it was seen in the previous section to undergo a *quasi* change. Similarly, at the end of G.C. 1.7 Aristotle speaks of an agent which, in a chain of affections, is itself unaffected (324a30-34). In this case, the agent, at least the initial one, is not reciprocally acted upon in acting because it is not *per se* or by definition embodied in matter (324a35). So, for example, when the art of healing causes or produces health, it itself is unaffected, as opposed, say, to the medicine which is used by the doctor; or when the idea of the house in the builder causes him to act upon some matter, viz. bricks and wood (324a34-b3). Although avoiding reciprocity, the account is inappropriate in that the perceptual agents -- the perceived objects -- are embodied by definition.

¹⁹⁴ D.A. 417b2-5. Trans: 'Being affected is not a single thing either; it is first a kind of destruction of something by its contrary, and second it is rather the preservation of that which is so potentially by that which is so actually and is like it in the way that a potentiality may be like an actuality.'

affected, acted upon, then it is actually *like* that object:

τὸ δ' αἰσθητικὸν δυνάμει ἐστὶν οἷον τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἤδη ἐντελεχία,
καθάπερ εἴρηται. πάσχει μὲν οὖν οὐχ ὅμοιον ὄν, πεπονθὸς δ'
ὁμοίωται καὶ ἔστιν οἷον ἐκεῖνο.¹⁹⁵

Its determinate capacity has been realised by its proper object.¹⁹⁶ Crucially, however, this account does not entail a reciprocal causal relation between the subject and its object, for it only refers to the subject undergoing any sort of change. If it were causally reciprocal, then we would have to maintain that the object underwent a similar or analogous sort of affection in being perceived. Thus the epistemological account of perception, and by extension intellection, as we have witnessed thus far would appear to consist of a causal relation in which the epistemic subject is affected by certain sorts of objects.

III Self-Consciousness: De Anima 3.2

But is the above account of perception sufficient? Does it explain all that is essential to the perceptual activity? The opening passage of D.A. 3.2 would appear, on the face of it, to indicate otherwise:

ἐπεὶ δ' αἰσθανόμεθα ὅτι ὁρῶμεν καὶ ἀκούομεν, ἀνάγκη ἢ τῇ ὄψει
αἰσθάνεσθαι ὅτι ὁρᾷ, ἢ ἑτέρᾳ. ἀλλ' ἢ αὐτὴ ἔσται τῆς ὄψεως καὶ τοῦ
ὑποκειμένου χρώματος. ὥστε ἢ δύο τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται ἢ αὐτὴ αὐτῆς.
ἔτι δ' εἰ καὶ ἑτέρα εἴη ἢ τῆς ὄψεως αἴσθησις, ἢ εἰς ἄπειρον εἴσιν ἢ
αὐτὴ τις ἔσται αὐτῆς· ὥστ' ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης τοῦτο ποιητέον. ἔχει δ'
ἀπορίαν.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ D.A. 418a3-6. Trans: 'That which can perceive [sc. the faculty] is, as we have said, potentially such as the object of perception already is actually. It is not like the object, then, when it is being affected by it, but once it has been affected it becomes like it and is such as it is.' Another type of affection that Aristotle discusses, although not directly relevant to the present discussion, comes with the object of desire, cf. D.A. 3.10, 433a13-19. Also see R.R.K. Sorabji, Matter, Space and Motion (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1988), p. 223.

¹⁹⁶ I say proper object because we are talking about determinate capacities. So, for instance, audible things *qua* audible do not and could not have an effect on one's faculty of sight. Cf. Posterior Analytics 87b27ff. where Aristotle remarks that it is not possible to think perceptibles nor perceive demonstrations or arguments.

¹⁹⁷ D.A. 425b12-17. Trans: 'Since we perceive that we see and hear, it must either be by sight or by another (sc. sense) that one perceives that one sees. But then there will be the same [sc. sense] for sight and for colour, viz. the object of sight. So that either there will be two [sc. senses] for the same thing or the [sc. sense] must perceive itself. Further, even if the sense which perceives sight were different from sight, either there will be an infinite regress or there will be some sense which is aware (or perceives) itself; so we had better admit this in the first instance. But this presents a difficulty.'

Judging by this passage, one could argue -- as some have done¹⁹⁸ -- that Aristotle is actually interested in giving an account of a 'self-consciousness'; an account of perception in which the perceiving subject has a concomitant or second-order awareness of itself *qua* perceiving subject, when it perceives an object. Now, if this is the case, then the causal account which I have outlined is, at best, only a constitutive part of a full account of perception. For it cannot account for the self-consciousness which occurs during the perceptual act. Moreover, if, as I have assumed, intellection is analogous in structure to perception, then this sort of self-consciousness will have serious repercussions for Aristotle's account of how the intellect apprehends itself. Self-intellection -- as with self-consciousness in perception -- will consist of an awareness which the intellect has of itself when it thinks. Built into all of the intellect's acts will be a reflexive component. Self-intellection, in other words, will not be derived from the intellect having itself as an intelligible object like any other first-order object. And if that is the case, then the sort of theory of self-intellection which I have been trying to formulate will be irrelevant when it comes to Aristotelian epistemology. For the mind or the intellect can know itself but just not in the manner which I have been discussing.

Catherine Osborne, however, has shown that Ross' view -- that D.A. 3.2 is advancing an account of self-consciousness -- is incorrect and misleading. Aristotle's focus in the opening lines of 3.2 is not on self-consciousness but rather the awareness that one is seeing as opposed to hearing. Aristotle, in other words, is not offering an account of self-consciousness but an account of the discrimination between the different senses and their proper objects, along with the awareness which accompanies this discriminatory act. Now this is not to deny that there is an awareness; there obviously is. But it is the awareness one has that he is seeing as opposed to hearing.¹⁹⁹ Theaetetus 184bff. suggested there is a focal point upon which all data converge. Here, I think, Aristotle is offering us something very similar: a perceptual awareness of the differences between the various senses and their objects and not a reflexive awareness of oneself as

¹⁹⁸ Ross, for example, in his commentary tells us that 3.2 is the first articulation of self-consciousness in Western philosophy. Aristotle De Anima, edited with Introduction and Commentary by Sir David Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 35. Also cf. Hamlyn, De Anima: Books II and III, p.121.

¹⁹⁹ Catherine Osborne, Aristotle, 'De Anima 3.2: How do we Perceive that we See and Hear?', Classical Quarterly 33 (1983), p. 407.

the perceiving subject. In other words, it is a focal point which is not reflexive but looks outwards.

In order to substantiate these remarks, let me briefly turn to the relevant passages, some of which have already been quoted and discussed. Aristotle begins this chapter with what he takes to be an empirical fact: αἰσθανόμεθα ὅτι ὁρῶμεν καὶ ἀκούομεν.²⁰⁰ Focusing on sight, he outlines two alternative descriptions of how we perceive that we see: We perceive that we see i) either by another sense (ἐτέρῳ) or ii) by sight itself (τῇ ὥσει), i.e. the same sense.²⁰¹ In both cases, however, sight itself or the other sense will perceive sight along with the proper object of sight, the coloured thing (τῆς ὥσεως καὶ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου χρώματος).²⁰² Both options are problematic. The first option seems to be flawed because it is open to a regress,²⁰³ coupled with the fact that there will be two senses for the same sense object.²⁰⁴ The second option, that it is the same sense, seems on the face of it to fare somewhat better once Aristotle gets around the problem that the second seer need not necessarily see in the same way as the first. That is, perception by sight (τῇ ὥσει) can be spoken of in more than one way.²⁰⁵ Or even if it does see in the same way, that may not be an insurmountable problem because the original seer is coloured in some way (ὥς κεχρωμάτισται).²⁰⁶ So the second option -- seeing by the same sense -- can now be subdivided into two different options: We perceive that we see iia) by sight but not in the same way as seeing colour or iib) by sight in the same way.

However, both iia and iib have their problems too. Firstly, they entail that each sense is not only responsible for perceiving its proper object (ἴδιον) -- in the case of sight, colour or the coloured thing²⁰⁷ -- but also the perception of itself.²⁰⁸ That is,

²⁰⁰ D.A. 425b12.

²⁰¹ D.A. 425b12-13.

²⁰² D.A. 425b14-15. Cf. C. Osborne, Aristotle, 'De Anima 3.2: How do we Perceive that we See and Hear?', p. 401.

²⁰³ D.A. 425b15.

²⁰⁴ cf. L.A. Kosman, 'Perceiving that we perceive: On the Soul III.2', Philosophical Review 84 (1975), p. 500.

²⁰⁵ D.A. 425b20-22.

²⁰⁶ D.A. 425b22-24.

²⁰⁷ Aristotle discusses the sense of sight in D.A. 2.7.

²⁰⁸ This discussion of proper and common objects reminds one of the κοινά passage in the Theaetetus, especially the account of the De Somno passage (hereafter referred to as De Som.) quoted below (n. 210) in which Aristotle speaks of what each sense can and cannot apprehend.

each sense, contrary to what Aristotle said in the previous chapter (D.A. 3.1), would be responsible for perceiving more than one thing.²⁰⁹ He would have to sacrifice the straightforward account of special sensibles.

Secondly, at De Som. (455a12-21) he says:

ἐπεὶ δ' ὑπάρχει καθ' ἐκάστην αἴσθησιν τὸ μὲν τι ἴδιον, τὸ δέ τι κοινόν, ἴδιον μὲν οἷον τῇ ὄψει τὸ ὁρᾶν, τῇ δ' ἀκοῇ τὸ ἀκούειν, καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐκάστη κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, ἔστι δέ τις καὶ κοινὴ δύναμις ἀκολουθοῦσα πάσαις, ἣ καὶ ὅτι ὁρᾷ καὶ ἀκούει αἰσθάνεται (οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῇ γε ὄψει ὁρᾷ ὅτι ὁρᾷ, καὶ κρίνει δὴ δύναται κρίνειν ὅτι ἕτερα τὰ γλυκέα τῶν λευκῶν οὔτε γεύσει οὔτε ὄψει οὔτε ἀμφοῖν, ἀλλὰ τινι κοινῷ μορίῳ τῶν αἰσθητηρίων ἀπάντων).²¹⁰

Now this passage states categorically that it is not by sight that one is aware or perceives that one sees. The senses strictly speaking are incapable of such a discriminatory act. Instead, there is some common thing (τις κοινὴ δύναμις) in virtue of which one is aware that he is seeing as opposed to hearing. There is something over and above the five senses, which enables the perceiver to discriminate and judge. But is this passage relevant to D.A. 3.2? If it is, both iia and iib cannot be put forth as tenable options to account for the awareness which the perceiver has during the perceptual act. For they explicitly contradict the De Som. passage. Moreover, as the notion of a common sense is not unique to De Som. but also occurs towards the end of D.A. 3.2, the grounds for using it as a tool to shed light upon the account of perceptual awareness in 3.2 are very compelling. So, how should this De Som. passage be used? In short, as Aristotle has already dismissed i and the De Som. passage contradicts iia and iib, the best strategy would be to interpret the opening section of 3.2 as nothing more than a brief introduction, canvassing what initially appear to be the only options available for explaining how perceptual awareness occurs.²¹¹ For, as we shall see, once the subsequent section (425b26-426b7) is taken into consideration, Aristotle then resolves the problem of perceptual awareness (426b8-427a16) in a somewhat different

²⁰⁹ D.A. 425a20.

²¹⁰ De Som. 455a13-21. Trans: 'Now every sense has both a special function of its own and something shared with the rest. The special function, for example, of the visual sense is seeing, that of the auditory, hearing, and similarly with each of the others; but there is also a common faculty associated with them all, whereby one is conscious that one sees and one hears (for surely it is not by sight that one is aware that one sees; and one judges and is capable of judging that sweet is different from white not by taste, nor by sight, nor by a combination of the two, but by some part which is common to all the sense organs;'

²¹¹ C. Osborne, Aristotle, 'De Anima 3.2: How do we Perceive that we See and Hear?', pp. 402-3.

manner.²¹²

The focus of the next section (425b26-426b7) is the objects of perception and their relation to the perceiver. Without rehearsing the arguments of Section I, Aristotle's point is that the essence of sight and the essence of visible things are so intertwined that one cannot properly discuss one without involving the other. Logically speaking, they are coextensive. Causally speaking, the subject's affection of which that subject is aware can only be properly understood, if the object, the agent, is also taken into account. Thus what this intermediate passage brings into clear focus is that the perceptual act is twofold in structure, and if perceptual awareness is an awareness of the perceptual act, then that awareness must make reference to or include the perceptible object. So, to say one is aware of his perception is to say one is aware of the object perceived.

Now, if the opening paragraph is recalled, at 425b14 Aristotle includes τὸ ὑποκείμενον χρώμα, i.e. the proper object of the visual sense, in his initial discussion of the perceptual subject's awareness.²¹³ It is now apparent why he would do so. Perceptual awareness is an awareness of perceptual objects. If Aristotle were simply concerned with outlining an account of self-consciousness, i.e. an exclusively self-directed awareness, he need only say that one is aware of his faculty of sight as such. Under those circumstances, only the subjective side is relevant. There would be no point -- as some have been keen to point out²¹⁴ -- in mentioning the proper object of sight, unless, of course, one cannot properly understand what sight is without referring to its object.²¹⁵ Likewise, Aristotle's original question would probably have taken a different form, i.e. how is it that we perceive that we perceive (αἰσθανόμεθα ὅτι αἰσθανόμεθα)²¹⁶ and not how we perceive that we see and hear.

According to Aristotle, therefore, one cannot properly look at the subject

²¹² C. Osborne, *ibid.*, p. 406.

²¹³ *D.A.* 425b14.

²¹⁴ On this basis, Hamlyn argues that Aristotle is wrong to mention the proper object of sight in this context. He maintains that one can be aware of seeing without seeing anything. Of course, Hamlyn is right, assuming Aristotle's interest is to give some kind of account of self-consciousness. See Hamlyn, *De Anima: Books II and III*, p. 121.

²¹⁵ cf. R.R.K. Sorabji, 'Aristotle on Demarcating the Five Senses', *Philosophical Review* 80 (1971), p. 55.

²¹⁶ It is noteworthy that Aristotle never says anywhere in his entire corpus: 'αἰσθανόμεθα ὅτι αἰσθανόμεθα'. See C. Osborne, Aristotle, 'De Anima 3.2: How do we Perceive that we See and Hear?', p. 406, n. 25.

without immediately addressing the objective side, since the two are causally related, the latter acting upon the former. Perception and the subject's perceptual awareness is structured in such a way, therefore, that there is no room for a purely inwardly self-directed awareness. Accordingly, Aristotle concludes the chapter (426b8-427a16) with a discussion which focuses on being aware that one is seeing a coloured thing as opposed to tasting a sweet thing.²¹⁷ He concludes, in other words, by looking at the awareness which is concerned with the discrimination between the various senses and their objects, something which the senses themselves are incapable of doing.²¹⁸ Does this mean that the common thing by which we discriminate seeing from hearing is itself open to an infinite regress? That is, does the act of discriminating seeing from hearing necessarily imply an awareness of the act? Perhaps, although Aristotle restricts himself to the claim that the common faculty is aware merely of the various senses at its disposal, not of itself.

To conclude, Aristotle's account of αἴσθησις is centred around relations, perceiving subjects, perceptible objects, patients and agents. He is interested in how objects affect subjects. Now, if intellection's structure is analogous, self-intellection will, like perception, be intrinsically bound up with the objects of the intellect. Thus let us now address that and related issues of intellection.

IV The Intellect and Intellection: De Anima 3.4

My motivation for discussing αἴσθησις was to find the insights that it might offer into the nature of νοῦς and the sort of relation it has with its objects. Thus far, the epistemological/psychological account has at its centre a causal relation in which the perceiving subject is focused outwards upon the agents which affect it and not upon itself. Next at D.A. 3.4 Aristotle initiates his discussion of νοῦς.

²¹⁷ D.A. 426b8-15.

²¹⁸ D.A. 426b17-22. The transitional movement of this chapter, it could be argued, mirrors the 'through/with' debate from the κοινά passage in the Theaetetus. For, here too we begin by exploring 'with the senses' and conclude with 'through the senses'. Of course, the crucial difference is that by the time Aristotle comes to discuss this question, the proper objects of the various senses are already in place. That was the task of D.A. 2.7-11.

After a programmatic statement about this chapter and the next (429a10-13). Aristotle outlines what would be the case if νοῦς were like αἴσθησις (429a15-18). It too would have its own proper objects and they would affect it in a analogous manner, i.e. it would be receptive of form (δεκτικὸν δὲ τοῦ εἶδους)²¹⁹ and, in the process, become like them (ὁμοίως ἔχειν) *qua* form, since they, both it and its object, have or take on the same form:

δεκτικὸν δὲ τοῦ εἶδους καὶ δυνάμει τοιοῦτον ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦτο, καὶ ὁμοίως ἔχειν, ὥσπερ τὸ αἰσθητικὸν πρὸς τὰ αἰσθητά, οὕτω τὸν νοῦν πρὸς τὰ νοητά.²²⁰

Now the question whether νοῦς actually enjoys a relationship with its objects which mirrors that of αἴσθησις is central to my enterprise. For the answer will give us a clear idea of how the epistemic subject stands in relation to its objects, which in turn will reveal whether or not the subject itself can be its own intelligible object. But, obviously, before these questions can be answered, I must sketch out Aristotle's account of νοῦς.

The rest of 3.4 can be divided into two parts: i) 429a18-429b22 sets out what νοῦς is, along with some of the characteristics which distinguish it from the perceptive faculty and ii) 429b22ff. presents us with two *aporiai* which the rest of the chapter then attempts to solve.

i) can be further subdivided in the following manner: a) 429a18-429b5 b) 429b5-b9 and c) 429b10-b22. a) focuses on defining what sort of thing νοῦς is, i.e. something which has no relation to the body, and some of the implications of that position. Having some notion of what νοῦς is, b) touches on the sort of relation which νοῦς has with its objects. And, finally, c) discusses the sorts of things νοῦς has as its objects.

Aristotle's central point in a) (429a18-429b5) is that νοῦς is something which is unique in nature. It is unmixed (ἀμιγής).²²¹ There is nothing alien or foreign (ἀλλότριον) present to it which would in any way hinder it.²²² From this Aristotle concludes that νοῦς has no nature outside of being a capacity (δυνατός), a capacity

²¹⁹ D.A. 429a15-16.

²²⁰ 429a15-18. Trans: '[sc. It must then be unaffected] but capable of receiving the form, and potentially such as it, although not identical with it; and as that which is capable of perceiving is to the objects of perception, so must be the intellect similarly to its objects.'

²²¹ D.A. 429a18.

²²² D.A. 429a20.

which is nothing actual until it thinks:

ὥστε μηδ' αὐτοῦ εἶναι φύσιν μηδεμίαν ἄλλ' ἢ ταύτην, ὅτι δυνατός.
ὁ ἄρα καλούμενος τῆς ψυχῆς νοῦς (...) οὐθέν ἐστιν ἐνεργεία τῶν
ὄντων πρὶν νοεῖν.²²³

Why does Aristotle take these claims to be his starting point? There are two reasons, I suggest. Firstly, by describing νοῦς as he does, he distinguishes it from its sister faculty in a radical way. Unlike αἴσθησις, it is in no way blended with the body.²²⁴ It lacks any sort of organ in which an ἀλλοίωσις of a physical sort can occur.²²⁵ Hence we know from the outset of the discussion that we are dealing with something that is separate from the other psychological faculties and has a nature that is unique to itself. Secondly, the picture of νοῦς as it now stands, i.e. as something unmixed and devoid of any type of nature save being a capacity to think, is what it looks like at its simplest or most basic conceptual level. In Aristotelian terms, this is νοῦς *qua* first potentiality. It is in virtue of such a conceptually simple state, according to Aristotle, that the noetic faculty can think all things. For it is not yet any of those things which it could think, whereas if it were then it could not think them.²²⁶

Having distinguished νοῦς from αἴσθησις on the grounds that the former has no connection with any sort of physical organ, Aristotle offers us an illustration of the sort of implication such a difference entails. When the perceptive faculty perceives a very intense perceptible (ἐκ τοῦ σφόδρα αἰσθητοῦ), it is weakened by the encounter (429a29-b5). The intellect on the other hand is strengthened by the experience:

ἀλλ' ὁ νοῦς ὅταν τι νοήσῃ σφόδρα νοητόν, οὐχ ἥττον νοεῖ τὰ
ὑποδεέστερα, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον.²²⁷

Now it is clear that Aristotle does attribute this difference to the fact that one has a physical component whereas the other does not: τὸ μὲν γὰρ αἰσθητικὸν οὐκ ἄνευ

²²³ D.A. 429a21-24. Trans: 'Hence it must have no other nature than this, that it is potential. That part of the soul, then, called intellect (...) is actually none of existing things before it thinks.'

²²³ D.A. 429a24-25.

²²⁴ D.A. 429a24-25.

²²⁵ D.A. 429a27. Cf. *Physics* 247b1 and 248a5-9.

²²⁶ cf. D.A. 2.11, 424a1ff. In this passage on the sense of touch, we have the perceptual analogue to intellectual blind spots. Aristotle argues that because the organ of touch has the πάθος of being to some extent hot, cold, hot and soft, it is blind to those particular πάθη, because it cannot become like (since it is already like) those degrees of relevant quality.

²²⁷ D.A. 429b3-4. Trans: 'But when the intellect thinks something especially fit for thought, it thinks inferior things not less but rather more.'

σώματος, ὁ δὲ χωριστός.²²⁸ So what does this tell us about the noetic faculty? Why does not something intensely intelligible destroy or damage the intellect?

Aristotle began the argument by saying that the intellect is unmixed (ἀμιγῆ) and there is nothing alien or foreign (ἄλλότριον) to hinder it in any way prior to thinking. However, are we to think that, as a result of the intellectual process, the intellect does become mixed or meshed together with something foreign? I think the answer is no. For if the things which the intellect thinks were foreign and, as a result, brought about some sort of mixture in being thought, then there would be an argument for saying that the intellect was not strengthened but weakened by the intellectual experience or event. For a consequence of the intellectual process on this reading would be that the intellect is rendered incapable of being able to think all things.²²⁹ So if we are to regard the intellect as being strengthened from thinking its objects, it seems that the things which it thinks cannot be viewed as foreign. And if there is nothing foreign (ἄλλότριον), it would be quite natural to infer that in *some sense* what the intellect thinks is itself (perhaps with, say, a difference of disposition and, as a result, intention²³⁰ or definition²³¹).²³² I think, therefore, it would be fair to claim that from a rather early stage of his account, Aristotle is interested in how it is that the intellect is its own object of thought. But how this can be the case obviously requires much explanation. As yet, it is very unclear how something can simultaneously fill both the role of agent and patient. Rather, all we have at this stage is that the intellect thinks nothing foreign. Yet, it is precisely what it means to say this that the latter part of 3.4 is going to work out, once the sort of relation which the intellect and its objects enjoy has been examined.

²²⁸ D.A. 429b4-5.

²²⁹ This is by no means meant to imply that while the intellect is actually thinking some 'x', that it can think all things during that particular time. However, to say that the intellect can only entertain one thought at any one particular time, is not the same as saying that the intellect has or acquired a blind spot.

²³⁰ By 'intention' in this context I have the standard sense of 'aboutness' in mind. However, I would be just as comfortable with 'sense' (in the Fregean sense), i.e. one referent with two different senses. The classic example being Venus as the evening star and as the morning star. Gottlob Frege, 'On Sense and Reference', *Meaning and Reference*, ed. A.W. Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.24.

²³¹ Definition or definitional, I think picks out the same nuance as intention or sense. Ultimately, these terms are translations of τὸ εἶναι in the context of Aristotle saying thinking and thought are one but different *qua* τὸ εἶναι. Cf. *Metaphysics* 1074b38 (hereafter referred to as *Metaph.*) and *Physics* 202b12-13. Also cf. nn. 176 and 249.

²³² Of course, all this implies that there is something alien in the act of perception which weakens the perceptive faculty. The sense in which this is true is that if sensible form is too extreme, it causes damage to the organ which is a necessary condition for perception to occur successfully.

To understand b) (429b5-9), the intellect's relation to its objects, we have to keep before ourselves the Aristotelian doctrine of first and second potentiality and actuality. This is to be expected for two reasons: firstly, we are working under the assumption that the intellect is analogous, at least in some ways, to perception and, secondly, we have already seen what the intellect is *qua* first potentiality. Aristotle's thesis here is that the knower (ὁ ἐπιστήμων)²³³ is said to be an actual knower when he has *become* (γένηται) each of the intelligible objects in question. Intellectual affection, it would seem, results in some kind of identity relation, whereby the epistemic subject actually *becomes* the object it thinks.²³⁴ Once the epistemic subject has reached that stage, it is able to think these objects through itself (δι' αὐτοῦ), i.e. without anyone's assistance, because by having become them at some point it has acquired a certain disposition, a ἔξις.²³⁵ When the intellect has this disposition, it is at the level of first actuality, since it is in possession of some sort of knowledge (e.g. mathematical knowledge) which is part of the intellective soul's furniture. On the other hand when the individual is actually exercising his knowledge he is at the level of second actuality. He is actually thinking the things which he knows and so actually is them.

The point of this brief passage is to disclose how the knower, ὁ ἐπιστήμων, stands in relation to the things which it knows. The γένηται at 429b6, I suggest, is indicative of two relations: i) a causal one, for the intellect as a potential knower comes to know -- resulting in the acquisition of a specific disposition, a ἔξις -- and this occurs because its intellectual capacity is acted upon in some way and ii) an identity relation, because the knower, by becoming its objects, is in some way identical with those things which it knows. Yet the latter claim, *prima facie*, is problematic, because if the subject is

²³³ D.A. 429b4-6. It is important not to confuse the knower with, say, the thinker. For all knowledge presupposes being able to think but it is certainly not the case that thinking presupposes knowledge. Thinking is not necessarily knowing but one would certainly say that when he or she is in the act of knowing something, they are thinking.

²³⁴ How the act of thinking, and therefore knowing, comes about at all is a question which will be addressed in Section V.

²³⁵ D.A. 429b7. The phrase δι' αὐτοῦ appears again at 429b9. I accept Bywater's emendation of the text from δὲ αὐτὸν. Kahn, I think wrongly, argues that the Bywater emendation is wrong because it is a pointless repetition. However, a result of Kahn's interpretation is that suddenly we are talking about the intellect being able to think itself. The problem with such a view is that it calls into question the structure of the chapter. For one thing self-thinking or self-intellection at most has thus far only been alluded to. But more importantly, it would make no sense for Aristotle to want to discuss self-thinking yet, since it is one of the *aporiai* which he himself raises in this very chapter at 429b26. See C. Kahn 'Aristotle on Thinking', *Aristotle's De Anima*, edd. M.C. Nussbaum and A.O. Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), n. 29.

identical with the object, then what happens to it *qua* subject? How can it remain a knower, if it is supposed to be *identical* with the thing known? For, presumably, the identity relation entails that it be the object, i.e. that thing with which it has become identical.

At c) (429b10-429b21) Aristotle takes the proper objects of νοῦς, the νοητά, to be separable immaterial essences (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) -- the formal principles of things both material and abstract²³⁶ -- as opposed to the things of which they are the essences.²³⁷ Now, Aristotle insists that only inasmuch as these things are immaterial are they the objects of νοῦς: ὅλως ἄρα ὡς χωριστὰ τὰ πράγματα τῆς ὕλης, οὕτω καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν νοῦν.²³⁸ There are, I think, two reasons for this. Firstly, we are working under the assumption that the intellectual faculty is analogous to the perceptive one, so it is only fitting that it too have proper objects which are capable of affecting it:

εἰ δὴ ἐστὶ τὸ νοεῖν ὥσπερ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι, ἢ πάσχειν τι ἂν εἴη ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ ἢ τι τοιοῦτον ἕτερον.²³⁹

That is, they are going to have to be intelligible or thinkable, and this, according to Aristotle, entails immateriality:

ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἔχουσιν ὕλην δυνάμει ἕκαστον ἔστι τῶν νοητῶν. ὥστ' ἐκείνοις μὲν οὐχ ὑπάρξει νοῦς (ἄνευ γὰρ ὕλης δύναμις ὁ νοῦς τῶν τοιούτων), ἐκείνῳ δὲ τὸ νοητὸν ὑπάρξει.²⁴⁰

Both the subject and object are essentially alike in that they are both immaterial. The second reason, which is really a corollary to the first, is that because knowledge entails the knower actually becoming the thing known and not just, say, assimilated to it, presumably those objects cannot be embodied.²⁴¹ For if they were, it is hard to imagine how one could ever know anything, if knowing requires becoming the thing known.

²³⁶ cf. Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: the desire to understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 121-2.

²³⁷ Also cf. *D.A.* 417b22-23 where Aristotle talks of individuals (ἕκαστα) as the objects of perception and universals (τῶν καθόλου) νοῦς. Of course, this also what the *Posterior Analytics* tells us, cf. 81b1ff., 86a30, 87b30ff., 88b30ff. and 100a4-b5. Also cf. *Topics* 105a13-14.

²³⁸ *D.A.* 429b21-22.

²³⁹ *D.A.* 429a13-15. Trans: 'Now, if thinking is akin to perceiving, it would be either being affected in some way by the object of thought or something else of this kind.'

²⁴⁰ *D.A.* 430a6-9. Trans: 'In those things which have matter each of the objects of thought is present potentially. Hence they will not have the intellect in them (for intellect is a potentiality for being such things without their matter), while it will have what can be thought in it.'

²⁴¹ In this sense knowing something and perceiving are disanalogous. For the perceptual process does not entail the perceiving subject becoming *identical* with the thing perceived but rather *like* it. For a detailed discussion of the difference between becoming *like* and *identical*, see R. Sorabji, 'Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle's Theory of Sense Perception', pp. 211-13.

Upon concluding his initial outline of the intellect at 429b22ff., Aristotle raises two *aporiai*: i) If thinking is a passive affection, how can νοῦς be something ἀπλοῦν and ἀπαθές? ii) Is νοῦς itself a νοητόν?²⁴² The reason for Aristotle raising these *aporiai* is because the account of the intellect offered thus far is at best a cursory sketch. To say that the intellect is ἀμιγής is not going to suffice as a proper account of the intellect. It might serve as a first step in drawing the general boundaries between νοῦς and the other faculties but it does no more than that. It does not, for instance, specify or differentiate between the different levels of actuality and potentiality which both the faculty and its objects are capable of realising; nor does it make clear what it means for νοῦς to become its objects.²⁴³ For there are two different relations at work here. There is the causal one in which the intellect is affected by its objects and the identity claim which maintains that the intellect is identical with its objects. Exactly how both of these relations can coexist within the intellect is in need of some explanation. The task of the *aporiai*, therefore, is to specify clearly and fully just how the intellectual process operates with respect to the way in which the epistemic subject and its objects relate to one another, and in what sense is the former to be thought of as identical with the latter.²⁴⁴ Only when the exact nature of their relationship has been disclosed, will the essential nature of the intellect be understood.

First *aporia*:

ἀπορήσειε δ' ἄν τις, εἰ ὁ νοῦς ἀπλοῦν ἐστὶ καὶ ἀπαθές καὶ μηθενὶ μηθὲν ἔχει κοινόν, ὥσπερ φησὶν Ἀναξαγόρας, πῶς νοήσει, εἰ τὸ νοεῖν πάσχειν τί ἐστὶν (ἢ γάρ τι κοινὸν ἀμφοῖν ὑπάρχει, τὸ μὲν ποιεῖν δοκεῖ τὸ δὲ πάσχειν), ...²⁴⁵

²⁴² D.A. 429b22-26.

²⁴³ Apart from the explicit reference to Anaxagoras in this chapter (429a19; 429b24), also cf. D.A. 405b19-21. This in effect is what Socrates accuses Anaxagoras of in the *Phaedo*, see *Phaedo* 97b9-99d2.

²⁴⁴ Richard Sorabji has suggested to me in conversation that the two terms (ἀπλοῦν and ἀπαθές) of the first *aporiai* refer to νοῦς prior to it thinking. I disagree with this interpretation for structural reasons. Namely, I think the structure of 3.4 much better served if the first *aporiai* is taken to refer to the actual intellectual process itself. My reasons are as follows: Firstly, by the time we get to the *aporia*, Aristotle has already outlined all the components involved in the intellectual process, so it would seem odd at that point to raise a problem that did not involve them and the process of which they are but rather to go back and examine the intellect *qua* first potentiality. Secondly, I think the two *aporiai* hang together much better if the first one is concentrating on problems that arise from that process and the second one then explores what follows from such a process. Moreover, on Sorabji's interpretation one must take ἀπλοῦν and ἀμιγής to denote the same attribute, which I think is also problematic. See n. 247. And finally, given the nuances that two *aporiai* bring out on my interpretation, I think they lead into the tablet analogy much better than they would otherwise.

²⁴⁵ D.A. 429b22-26. Trans: 'Given that the intellect is something simple and unaffected, and that it has nothing in common with anything else, as Anaxagoras says, someone might raise these questions: how

i) Is the intellect something simple? ii) Is the intellect something impassive? Aristotle answers both questions, characteristically, with an affirmative that is *qualified*.²⁴⁶ Taking these questions in order, unlike ἀμιγής, ἀπλοῦν refers to the internal structure of the intellect.²⁴⁷ This attribute picks out the need for the intellect's internal distinctions to be drawn properly. For ἀπλοῦν in its strongest possible and *unqualified* sense, i.e. ἀπλοῦν *simpliciter*, would entail that the intellect has only one internal state, whatever it may be. But, as is already obvious from what has been said, this is not the case. Yet the intellect at the level of first potentiality is certainly ἀπλοῦν. It is nothing but a capacity to think. However, such a claim does not prohibit the intellect being able to realise other internal states or levels of actuality, such as acquiring a ἔξις or actively thinking some intelligible object. In other words, the intellect is not simply something ἀπλοῦν. The intellect, after all, is not reducible to any one particular level or state. If it were, then the entire potentiality/actuality schema would cease to be a tenable account of the intellect's internal structure. Finally, the intellect must be distinguished from what it thinks. So, while being able to become the νοητά, it is not identical with those objects *simpliciter*. If it were, a consequence of such a thesis would be that each of the νοητά can themselves νοεῖν.²⁴⁸ Again its internal structure would be rendered untenable and it would be something ἀπλοῦν *simpliciter*. Although the identity relation between the epistemic subject and object is crucial, the causal relation is as well. Thus certain distinctions between thinking and being thought must be retained. That Aristotle was sensitive to the need for this distinction is clear from elsewhere: οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῦτὸ τὸ εἶναι νοήσει καὶ νοουμένῳ.²⁴⁹ Thus the question whether intellect is something simple demands that we make the necessary logical distinctions to accommodate the intellect's internal structure in such a way that various states can be realised with respect to itself and the objects it thinks. Thus νοῦς is ἀπλοῦν but not ἀπλοῦν *simpliciter*.

will it think, if thinking is being affected in some way (for it is insofar as two things have something in common that the one is thought to act and the other to be affected), ...

²⁴⁶ Aristotle actually mentions three if you include μηθενὶ μηθὲν ἔχει κοινόν. However, that is just a reiteration of the intellect being unmixed. It is the ἀπλοῦν καὶ ἀπαθές with which he is now concerned, because it is through answering them that the intellectual process will be understood.

²⁴⁷ ἀμιγής does not refer to the internal structure of the intellect but rather the intellect's relation to the body and how it is not a composite. Unlike particulars, it is not a τόδε ἐν τῷδε, see *D.A.* 429b14.

²⁴⁸ cf. the discussion of Plato's *Parmenides* 132c9-11 in Chapter II.

²⁴⁹ *Metaph.* 1074b38.

ii) Why might the intellect be something ἀπαθές? Unlike the previous attribute which emphasised certain logical distinctions which are necessary for the internal structure of the intellect, ἀπαθές brings out the causal dimension. Intellect is not the sort of thing which can be affected by anything. For instance, *qua* intellect, it cannot be affected by sensible properties, i.e. the sensible form, of sensible objects. Thus there is some sense in which the intellect is something ἀπαθές. The intellect at the level of first potentiality is not just any sort of capacity but a capacity to think that which is intelligible as opposed, say, a capacity to perceive. It is only receptive of intelligible form.²⁵⁰ Thus the intellect can *become* anything as long as it is anything intelligible. On the other hand, if it were something ἀπαθές pure and simple, then we would either have to maintain that we are not capable of thinking or that we are always thinking. For this view entails that the state of νοῦς is unaffected and, as a result, can only be understood as having one particular unchanging state, be it thinking or not thinking.²⁵¹ Hence the intellect is something which is both impassive and passive.²⁵²

So how has the discussion of ἀπλοῦν and ἀπαθές advanced the argument? The first of the two attributes emphasised the need for certain logical distinctions within the intellect's structure. The second brought to the fore the causal relation between the epistemic subject and its object and, with it, the identity relation that holds between them. The intellect can be affected by its proper objects because it is same as them potentially. Yet prior to being affected by them, the intellect is different because it is only potentially the intelligibles:

ἢ τὸ μὲν πάσχειν κατὰ κοινόν τι διήρηται πρότερον, ὅτι δυνάμει πῶς
ἐστι τὰ νοητὰ ὁ νοῦς, ἀλλ' ἐντελεχείᾳ οὐδέν, πρὶν ἂν νοῇ.²⁵³

Aristotle compares this intellectual process to a writing tablet:

δυνάμει δ' οὕτως ὥσπερ ἐν γραμματείᾳ ᾧ μὴθὲν ἐνυπάρχει
ἐντελεχείᾳ γεγραμμένον· ὅπερ συμβαίνει ἐπὶ τοῦ νοῦ.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ cf. n. 184.

²⁵¹ For similar sorts of puzzles cf. Plato's *Sophist* 248eff. and *Cratylus* 440aff.

²⁵² Of course, this is not meant to include Aristotle's divine intellect, which is always in a state of thinking.

²⁵³ *D.A.* 429b29-31. Trans: 'Now being affected in virtue of something common has been discussed before, to the effect that the intellect is potentially the objects of thought, although it is nothing before it thinks.'

²⁵⁴ *D.A.* 429b31-430a2. Trans: 'Potentially in the same way as there is writing on a tablet on which nothing actually written exists; that is what happens in the case of the intellect.'

The intellect on this analogy is ἀπλοῦν in the same way that a blank writing tablet has the capacity to be written upon. Yet, neither is ἀπλοῦν *simpliciter*; they both admit of internal distinctions. For what it is to be a tablet is never simply either reduced to being in a state of ‘blankness’ or to what is written upon it. Rather the tablet always retains the capacity to be written upon, even once it has been written upon. Likewise, there is the distinction between the tablet and the writing which is on it, the latter not having the capacity to be written upon, just as the intelligibles *qua* intelligible do not have the capacity to think. The difference and distinction between that which has the capacity to be written upon and the content which is written upon that thing is never simply obliterated. Moreover, this analogy brings out the intellect’s impassivity in virtue of the fact that it can only be written upon by a certain type of thing, intelligibles, whereas its passivity is manifest through the fact that it can be written on at all. Finally, this analogy also captures the sense in which the intellect is ἀμιγής. For the tablet is one homogeneous thing with or without content. The combination of the tablet and the writing on it does not create a composite or heterogeneous entity. Likewise, the intellect at every one of its conceptual stages is exclusively intellectual in kind.

But what does it mean, or rather what does it entail, for the intellectual part of the soul to become the things which are written on it? Aristotle has from the outset of his discussion of the intellect -- recall the material about nothing being ἀλλότριον to the intellect -- spoken of or implied that the epistemic subject, the intellect, and its objects are in some sense identical. It is for this reason that he is now forced to raise the second of his two *aporiai*: Can the intellect be its own object?

Second *aporia*: ἔτι δ’ εἰ νοητὸς καὶ αὐτός. Is νοῦς itself also a νοητόν? His answer is yes:

καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ νοητὸς ἐστὶν ὥσπερ τὰ νοητά. ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἄνευ
 ὕλης τὸ αὐτό ἐστὶ τὸ νοοῦν καὶ τὸ νοούμενον· ἡ γὰρ ἐπιστήμη ἢ
 θεωρητικὴ καὶ τὸ οὕτως ἐπιστητὸν τὸ αὐτό ἐστὶν.²⁵⁵

According to Aristotle, thinking and, consequently, knowing things entails that the subject actually become them. The epistemic subject, νοῦς, becomes that which it

²⁵⁵ D.A. 430a2-5. Trans: ‘And it is itself an object of thought, just as its objects are. For, in the case of those things which have no matter, that which thinks and that which is thought are the same. For contemplative knowledge and that which is known in that way are the same.’ Aristotle also makes the same point in the *Metaph.* about the lack of matter enabling a sort of identity, 1075a3-5. See Section V, especially n. 272.

thinks, i.e. the object. Now the reason it can, at least in part, do so, according to Aristotle, is because its objects are immaterial. For the absence of matter allows for numerical identity between thinker and object thought. Of course, immateriality by itself is insufficient to explain the intellectual process. But immateriality, coupled with the causal relation between the epistemic subject and the intelligible object, along with an identity claim, is sufficient to explain how it is that the epistemic subject actually becomes what it thinks. For we are not dealing with two independent entities, the intellect and the intelligible object. Yet all of this only explains the mechanics of the intellectual process, i.e. knowing things involves becoming them in some sense. However, it does not necessarily explain why the subject has to become a νοητόν. Nor does it explain what it means to become the object. For one must be careful to avoid the fallacy which claims that when I think a horse or a triangle, I am then a horse or a triangle. Thus why and in what sense does the epistemic subject, the intellect, *become* what it thinks?

To begin, only the intellect is capable of an actual independent existence. That is, the actual existence of its intelligible objects depends on their inherence in the intellect.²⁵⁶ The writing tablet, for example, is not a composition that is composed out of two separately existing entities.²⁵⁷ The writing on the tablet does not enjoy an actual existence outside of that thing on which it is written. Thus, if the intellect's objects -- the intelligible forms or intelligible essences -- are to attain any sort of actuality it will have to be through their inherence in the intellect. This, of course, is not to say that they do not exist outside of the intellect *qua* first potentiality, nor that the essences of things exist out there in the world in the many individual substances which are their instantiations.²⁵⁸ But rather the intelligibles or the *intelligible form* of things *qua* first and second actuality had to have been thought or actually be in the process of being thought by the intellect, and thus inhere in it. So the intellect in thinking its objects is

²⁵⁶ At this point the situation becomes disanalogous to perception in that the intellect's objects do not reside outside of the intellect in an actual sense as they do with the perceptive faculty. This is not meant to imply that essences do not exist outside of the mind, they do. They exist in all the individual instantiations of them, such as with the essence of horse and the many horses. However, the *intelligible form* of the essence must inhere in the thinker.

²⁵⁷ Now, of course, the tablet does not do the writing but that will be accounted for when the active intellect establishes the right conditions for the intelligibles to be impressed upon the tablet, which will be discussed below.

²⁵⁸ cf. n 256.

capable of becoming them. For these objects are really just another aspect of this intellectual faculty, along with the capacity to think and the realisation of that capacity. (Just as the written letters on the tablet are another aspect of the tablet.)²⁵⁹

If these intelligible objects inhere in and are part of the overall structure of the intellect, why does it then follow that the intellect is or becomes an object, a νοητόν? And in doing so, why does the intellect not become a horse and gallop off when it thinks about a horse or a triangle, making it pointy, when it thinks a triangle? Why just an intelligible object, a νοητόν? In other words, what exactly does the identity relation or saying the intellect is the same as its objects entail?

Beginning with the second of these two questions, as it is the case that the things thought are part of the intellect and that the intellect is a homogeneous entity, it follows that whatever properties these objects have they will be intellectual. Now, according to Aristotle, being part of or inhering in the intellect entails immateriality. Thus when I think a horse or a triangle, given that these objects of thought inhere in the intellect, I shall not take on any of their extensional properties.²⁶⁰ However, as for their intensional²⁶¹ properties (by which is meant the essential or definitional properties in their intelligible form), as they are intellectual in kind, I shall take on those properties in thinking the intelligible object. For these are compatible with the intellect's homogeneous nature, i.e. they are intellectual. As a result, when the intellect thinks horse, it does not become one.

As for the first question, one of the intensional properties of these objects, if not the most fundamental one, is being intelligible or thinkable. Thus the intellect, given that it does take on the intensional properties and, in so doing, becomes identical with them, must itself become intelligible. And to say it becomes intelligible, is the equivalent of saying the intellect has become an intellectual object or a νοητόν. For that is what intended by νοητόν, i.e. being intelligible. Intelligibility is 'objectibility'.

Thus one could now state the matter as follows: Just as the intellect's capacity to think is one of its dispositions or states, so too is its thinking an intelligible,

²⁵⁹ cf. 417b23-24 where Aristotle remarks: ἡ δ' ἐπιστήμη τῶν καθόλου· ταῦτα δ' ἐν αὐτῇ πῶς ἐστι τῇ ψυχῇ. Similarly, at D.A. 429a27-28, Aristotle says the intellect is the τόπος εἰδῶν.

²⁶⁰ Extensional picks out those properties which particular horses have, such as fury, four legs etc.

²⁶¹ The term 'intensional' must not be confused with 'intentional' which I used earlier to denote 'sense' or 'aboutness'.

and, as a result, being that intelligible or νοητόν. Hence it is not as if in becoming a νοητόν, νοῦς is becoming something other than itself.²⁶² Instead, it is simply the full realisation of what it is to be intellect. It is the essence or end of the intellectual soul or epistemic subject, just as actually seeing is the essence of what it is to be an eye.²⁶³ For the faculty prior to thinking is just the potentiality to think those intelligible things, and the subject's essence is only realised when it becomes these intelligible objects. Thus νοῦς, in becoming these objects, is still itself, but its disposition is intellect *qua* object. And as its disposition has changed, so it is different intentionally²⁶⁴ from what it was previously when it was intellect disposed as a subject, i.e. that thing which can think. So to say that it is differently disposed is simply to say that it is at a different level of actualisation, i.e. its full actualisation. Thus the relation between the epistemic subject and its object is one in which that subject has as its end to become an intelligible object when thinking.

The second *aporia*, therefore, cannot be avoided, if one is to give an account of thinking (or at least the Aristotelian account). For the essence of νοῦς is to become fully actualised as a νοητόν. Hence the relation between the subject and object is such that by thinking a νοητόν, νοῦς *de facto* becomes a νοητόν. Of course, the intellect throughout must be carefully qualified; otherwise we could end up in an absurd situation where once νοῦς has become a νοητόν it is no longer able to think, since intelligibles as such are incapable of thinking, just as the writing on the tablet could not be written upon. For νοῦς might be capable of becoming a νοητόν but it is not exhausted by doing so. The intellectual faculty itself is not simply reduced to its objects by becoming them. In other words, despite its being able to become a νοητόν it can still νοεῖν, just not *qua* νοητόν. For the essence of a νοητόν is not to think but to be thought. (Aristotle raises this point in a problematic manner at 429b27ff., ἥ γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις νοῦς ὑπάρξει, εἰ μὴ

²⁶² In the context of the intellect becoming its objects Sorabji, I think rightly, makes much of the 'road to Thebes' analogy from *Phys.* 3.3. To quote: 'One difficult saying of Aristotle is that the act of thinking is identical with the object of thought. The basis of this idea can safely be traced (although this is not always recognised) to a discussion in *Physics* 3.3.' R.R.K. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1983), p. 144. Here too we have something which is accessible from different perspectives. However, this analogy (just as was the case with perception) falls short on the symmetry issue between the two sides.

²⁶³ cf. n. 178.

²⁶⁴ cf. n. 230.

κατ' ἄλλο αὐτὸς νοητός,) The point about νοῦς' capacity to become a νοητόν without losing its capacity to νοεῖν is easily illustrated with a further reference to the tablet analogy. The writing tablet is never simply reduced to what is written on it. It is always something over and above the things inscribed on it and thus is capable of having more things inscribed on it.

Having seen how the epistemic subject stands in relation to its objects and what its identity with those objects entails, in what sense does the epistemic subject have itself as an object of intellection? What sort of account of self-intellection is Aristotle offering his reader? Given that the primary function of the subject is to become an object, an object whose intensional content is not -- at least not transparently -- that thinking subject, the subject will not grasp itself as that object; at least not in a transparent manner. For although the epistemic subject by thinking object 'x' becomes that object and, as such, is identical with it, the subject does not recognise itself in that object or as that object. Instead the subject only apprehends itself in an opaque manner. For it thinks 'x' and becomes 'x' and so 'x' is coincidentally itself. But thinking 'x' does not entail the epistemic subject thinking itself transparently. Thus, despite it thinking itself when thinking its object by virtue of becoming those objects, the subject, does not grasp itself as that object. Unlike Plato's account of the subject in which an account could not be given of objects (Chapter III), with Aristotle we have an account in which the subject is subsumed by the object. Thus, the subject in thinking its object does not transparently think itself as that object. Rather it has an apprehension of that object, which by coincidence happens to be itself. On the Aristotelian account, therefore, the intellect only has itself as an object of intellection in a non-transparent manner. And the reason for this opacity, I think, ultimately can be traced to the emphasis which Aristotle places on the subject's identity with the object. As a result, we do have an account of self-intellection but in a rather odd guise. The subject only thinks itself incidentally. Aristotle, unlike Plato, has offered us an account of how the subject relates to objects and how the subject can have itself as its own object of intellection, yet in such a way that that subject does not grasp itself as the object. Whereas Plato's objects were eclipsed by the subject, now we have a scenario where the subject is eclipsed by the object. A coherent or adequate account of self-intellection requires that neither side

eclipse the other.

V
Some Objections
Metaphysics 12.7 & 12.9 & De Anima 3.5

Before concluding, I must address two obvious objections to my conclusion that for Aristotle the intellect only opaquely or incidentally grasps itself as its object: namely, the account of God's self-thinking thought in Metaphysics 12.7 and 12.9 and the active intellect of De Anima 3.5 acting upon the passive intellect.

Taking them in order, one could argue that in the case of God alone, one does have an instance of an intellectual subject thinking itself in a transparent manner, because God is self-thinking thought: ἔστιν ἡ νόησις νοήσεως νόησις.²⁶⁵ He is not incidentally his own object but intrinsically. He has himself as a transparent object. However, when one actually looks at the manner in which Aristotle discusses the issue of divine self-contemplation, it becomes apparent, I think, that the thinking subject here too is subsumed by the intelligible object.

Beginning with 12.7, the first part of this chapter (1072a19-1072b14) concentrates on establishing the Aristotelian prime mover, God, as a final cause in virtue of the fact that it is good and an object of desire. From 1072b14-30, however, Aristotle addresses the intellectual activity of his prime mover. In short, he says, the prime mover has for an eternity what we have for only a short time, a life of theoretical thought. According to Aristotle, that is the best and most pleasant activity.²⁶⁶ Thinking in this divine context deals with that which is best, and this happens to be itself, thinking.²⁶⁷ Thus we read:

αὐτὸν δὲ νοεῖ ὁ νοῦς κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ· νοητὸς γὰρ γίγνεται θιγγάνων καὶ νοῶν, ὥστε ταῦτόν νοῦς καὶ νοητόν. τὸ γὰρ δεκτικὸν τοῦ νοητοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας νοῦς, ἐνεργεῖ δὲ ἔχων, ὥστ' ἐκείνου μᾶλλον τοῦτο ὃ δοκεῖ ὁ νοῦς θεῖον ἔχειν, καὶ ἡ θεωρία τὸ ἡδιστον καὶ ἄριστον.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Metaph. 1074b34-35.

²⁶⁶ Metaph. 1072b14-18.

²⁶⁷ Metaph. 1072b18-19. In this chapter, 12.7, Aristotle does not really argue for God having the best or most noble object, viz. himself, rather he just infers it from his most pleasant existence. The argument for that, i.e. the proper object for God's intellection, actually comes in 12.9 (1074b15-34).

²⁶⁸ Metaph. 1072b19-24. Trans: 'And thought thinks itself because it shares (partakes of) the nature of the

Now what is striking about this passage is that divine thinking is, structurally speaking, no different from our own. If anything, it would seem that in outlining this divine activity, Aristotle is simply outlining the generic abstract structure of thinking which is based upon the causal and identity relations which holds standardly between the subject and the object. The fact that God *qua* that which thinks is the object seems to be of secondary importance.²⁶⁹ What is of primary importance is that the thinking subject become identical with the object. Given the abstract and formulaic nature of this passage, it on its own is insufficient as a means of judging whether or not Aristotle is saying that the epistemic subject has itself as the object of thought in a transparent manner. For the object of the intellectual activity is expressed in such way that what is thought just so happens to coincide with the thinker. But it is unclear whether that subject has itself as an object in a transparent manner. If anything, the fact that we can partake of this activity is indicative of this not being the case. For when we mortal beings contemplate, we do not think of ourselves as God.

In 12.9 (1074b15-35) Aristotle (re)affirms that God has itself as its own object of thought on the grounds that it is the only suitable object for it, God, to have:

αὐτὸν ἄρα νοεῖ, εἴπερ ἐστὶ τὸ κράτιστον, καὶ ἔστιν ἡ νόησις νοήσεως
νόησις.²⁷⁰

The second section (1074b35-1075a5) then raises and responds to the objection that God, since thinking always has something else as its object, will be hard pressed to think itself:

φαίνεται δ' ἀεὶ ἄλλου ἢ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ
διάνοια, αὐτῆς δ' ἐν παρέργῳ. ἔτι εἰ ἄλλο τὸ νοεῖν καὶ τὸ νοεῖσθαι,
κατὰ πότερον αὐτῷ τὸ εἶ ὑπάρχει; οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῦτ' οὐτὶς εἶναι νοήσει
καὶ νοουμένῳ.²⁷¹

object of thought; for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and the object of thought are the same. For that which is capable of receiving the object of thought, i.e. the substance, is thought. And it is active when it possesses this object. Therefore the latter rather than the former is the divine element which thought seems to contain, and the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best.'

²⁶⁹ cf. Richard Norman, 'Aristotle's Philosopher-God', *Articles on Aristotle: Vol. 4 Psychology & Aesthetics*, edd. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield and Richard Sorabji (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1979), p. 97. Norman states the matter well: 'And when it is said that the Prime Mover 'thinks itself', what is meant is not 'self-contemplation' but simply that identity of intellect and object of thought that characterises all abstract thought'.

²⁷⁰ *Metaph.* 1074b33-35. Trans: 'Therefore it must be itself that thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking.'

²⁷¹ *Metaph.* 1074b35-38. Trans: 'But evidently knowledge and perception and opinion and understanding always have something else as their object, and themselves only by the way. Further if thinking and being

Aristotle gets around this problem by pointing out that in the theoretical sciences the thinking and the object of thought are one and the same:

οὐχ ἑτέρου οὖν ὄντος τοῦ νοουμένου καὶ τοῦ νοῦ, ὅσα μὴ ὕλην ἔχει,
τὸ αὐτὸ ἔσται, καὶ ἡ νόησις τῷ νοουμένῳ μία.²⁷²

Now Aristotle might have rescued God from thinking about things that are not worthy of itself but at a price. For in doing so, the divine intellect grasps itself as the object of thought in a non-transparent manner because the divine intellect in thinking thought (and this is why the mention of humans being able to partake of this divine activity is very revealing) is really just thinking the intelligible structure of reality.²⁷³ God does the same as we do, or rather we perform his divine activity, when we perform, i.e. contemplate, the theoretical sciences. But to say the Aristotelian God thinks the entire intelligible structure of reality in performing its divine activity is at best only implicitly, i.e. non-transparently, claiming that it has itself before itself in the sense of thinking itself as a thinking subject. Thus to cite the divine activity as a counterexample to my account of self-intellection in Section IV, I think falls short. For the ‘itself’, when spelled out, does not immediately or directly make reference to the thinking subject as the object in question. The epistemic subject, divine or otherwise, is subsumed or eclipsed by its intelligible object.

The second objection I want to address pertains to the active intellect of D.A. 3.5. One could argue that as the active intellect acts upon the passive intellect, the subject, the intellect itself is directly and transparently the object of intellection. For Aristotle tells us that just as with all of nature, there is an agent/patient structure with the soul as well.²⁷⁴ Without such a structure, we would have difficulties in accounting for

thought are different, in respect of which does goodness belong to thought? For being an act of thinking and being an object of thought are not the same.’

²⁷² Metaph. 1075a3-5. Trans: ‘As, then, thought and the object of thought are not different in the case of things that have not matter, they will be the same, i.e. the thinking will be one with the object of its thought.’

²⁷³ cf. Jonathan Lear, Aristotle: the desire to understand, pp. 316-17 for the view that the Aristotelian intellect thinks all of intelligible reality in thinking itself. Also see Richard Norman, ‘Aristotle’s Philosopher-God’, p.100. Norman sums up the matter as follows: ‘The difference between self-contemplation and the Prime Mover’s self-thinking is the difference between intellect whose object is primarily itself and intellect whose object is only incidentally itself. ...: in so far as it has become the objects of thought it thinks itself incidentally when it thinks the objects of thought. But it (Prime Mover) does not think itself as such.’ Given that 12.7 has shown the subject-object distinction to apply to God, I think Norman is wrong, to make such a distinction. For God acts upon himself *qua* intelligible reality. Also cf. Norman, ibid., p. 98.

²⁷⁴ D.A. 430a13-14.

how the intellectual process began in the first place. Thus there can be little doubt that the active intellect does bring about thinking and for that reason is a crucial part of the Aristotelian metaphysics and epistemology.²⁷⁵ What is of concern, however, is whether such an account affects my interpretation of self-intellection. I think it does not because if one follows Aristotle's analogy through, the active intellect itself is not the primary or first-order object:

... ὁ δὲ τῷ πάντα ποεῖν, ὡς ἔξις τις, οἷον τὸ φῶς· τρόπον γάρ τινα καὶ τὸ φῶς ποιεῖ τὰ δυνάμει ὄντα χρώματα ἐνεργείᾳ χρώματα.²⁷⁶

Rather, according to this analogy, the active intellect acts as a light which in turn allows the passive intellect, the subject, to apprehend (i.e. be acted upon by), the intelligible objects.²⁷⁷ Such an account suits my *object oriented* version of things because the active intellect itself is not the object but that which creates the right conditions for the objects to act. On this analogy, one does not see the *light* but what the light *illuminates*, i.e. the intelligibles. It is like the sun analogy in Plato's Republic in that one sees what the sun illuminates and not the light which it emits. Thus the account of the active intellect in D.A. 3.5 does not alter or endanger my interpretation of the way in which the intellect grasps itself as an object. If anything, the present image only enhances my view that the intellectual subject, divine or otherwise, is eclipsed by its objects.

VI

The Emergence of the Problem

I hope by now it has begun to become apparent why the first part of the dissertation (Chapters I-IV) has the title it does, 'The Emergence of the Problem'. My aim is to investigate a theory of self-intellection which has at its foundation the relation between the subject and the object such that the subject can be its own object. We began with a position that asserted the indiscernability of the epistemic subject and its object. It was a position which, if allowed to stand, would have destroyed any intelligible epistemology,

²⁷⁵ It must be noted that it is unclear whether the active intellect properly belongs to the human intellect or not (and for our purposes irrelevant as we are looking at the intellect purely from a formal point of view). For Aristotle concludes that this active intellect is eternal, immortal and unaffected.

²⁷⁶ D.A. 430a15-17. Trans: '... and there is another (sc. intellect) which is so by producing all things, as a kind of disposition, like light does; for in a way light too makes colours which are potential into actual colours.'

²⁷⁷ D.A. 430a15.

let alone a theory of self-intellection. For it did not tolerate coextensivity or any sort of causal relation between the epistemic subject and an intelligible object. But the Parmenidean account did not go unchallenged. Plato's response was to reinstate the two sides, the subject and object, as coextensive *relata*. Such a move served well as a beginning but it was just that, a beginning. A theory of self-intellection requires that what the subject is, if it is to have itself as object of intellection or cognition, be known. Chapter II did not address this issue. Plato's account of the epistemic subject in the Theaetetus, on the other hand, did. In that dialogue, there was a rich account of what it is to be a epistemic subject. However, it could not give an account of how that subject relates to intelligible objects because none of the objects canvassed could withstand philosophical scrutiny. And as self-intellection is a relation in which the subject has itself as an intelligible object, if there are no objects, then *a fortiori* a theory of self-intellection is out of the question. Thus enters Aristotle. For he does offer us an account of how the subject relates to objects and how it itself is its own object. However, the Aristotelian account of self-intellection is structured in such a way that, to all intents and purposes, the subject gets subsumed by its object. Aristotle's account leans so much in favour of the object or is so *object oriented*, that there ceases to be a place or role for the epistemic subject. For the intellect focuses on the object, which coincidentally happens to be itself, in such a way that it does not focus on the object as itself, a thinking subject, except opaquely. Hence the problem that has emerged could be articulated as follows: We either have an epistemic subject without an intelligible object or an intelligible object without an epistemic subject, but not both, which a theory of self-intellection requires.

II

The Problem and its Resolution

V

Sextus Empiricus and the Stoics on Self-Intellection

The problem of setting out a theory of self-intellection is essentially one of finding a balance between the epistemic subject and the intelligible object. The source of imbalance rests upon the incompatibility between, on the one hand, the identity relation of the subject and object and, on the other hand, their coextensive and causal relations. For the coextensive and causal relations allow for a difference between the subject and object, while the identity relation entails their identity. In this fifth chapter, I want to turn my attention to two things: (i) To examine the force of the paradox raised by Sextus Empiricus about the possibility of being able to give a coherent account of self-intellection; (ii) to return to an analysis of Stoic epistemology, focussing upon the manner in which they addressed the issue of how the epistemic subject might take itself as an intelligible object. My reason for doing so is not simply because the Stoics had some interesting things to say about how the epistemic subject might take itself as an object of thought but because Sextus articulates his paradox in response to Stoic epistemology. For his paradox incorporates one of, if not the, most basic presuppositions of Stoic epistemology -- materialism. The intellectual act, according to the materialist, is such that the intellectual content (or object known) comes to inhere in the mind in such a way that the mind either contains or becomes identical with that intellectual content. The full force of Sextus' attack upon the Stoics can, therefore, only be properly appreciated within the context of Stoic epistemology.

I

Sextus Empiricus' Paradox: The Rejection of Self-Intellection

With his paradox, Sextus sets out exactly why it is that self-intellection -- a theory in which the epistemic subject has itself as an object of intellection, and, as such, presupposes the subject/object relation -- is inherently flawed. His criticisms bring to

light why it is that either the subject cannot have itself as an object or that it has itself as an object but it *qua* subject is subsumed by that object. Either way, self-intellection comes undone as a theory, and, as a result, the intellect is rendered anomalous.

At Adversus Mathematicos 7.303ff., Sextus launches into his criticism about the notion of the intellect (διάνοια) discerning (γνωρίζει) either the body, i.e. the outward body,²⁷⁸ the senses or itself:

ναί, φασίν, οἱ δογματικοί, ἀλλ' ἡ διάνοια καὶ τὸν ὄγκον καὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις καὶ ἑαυτὴν γνωρίζει.²⁷⁹

As for whom Sextus intends by οἱ δογματικοί, I think there are three very good reasons for interpreting his tripartite attack to be orchestrated against the Stoics: (i) terminology, (ii) topic and (iii) the presupposition of materialism -- a Stoic doctrine -- which is central to Sextus' argument, especially as far as the third part of his attack is concerned.

Taking these points in order, (i) Sextus throughout his tripartite attack employs Stoic terminology. For example, in the passage just quoted, we have such Stoic terms as αἰσθήσεις and ὄγκος.²⁸⁰ Yet more telling than these terms is Sextus' constant use of καταλαμβάνω, the verb from which κατάληψις is derived (cf. passages quoted below). Thus, at the very least, there are terminological grounds for considering Sextus' opponents to be the Stoics.

(ii) Now, of course, Sextus' use of terminology is by no means conclusive proof. However, if one combines terminology with issues which were of interest to the Stoics, then one's case for claiming that Sextus is directing his energies against the Stoics becomes all the more stronger. For questions about how the intellect or intellectual part of soul might apprehend either the outward body (τὸν ὄγκον), the senses (τὰς αἰσθήσεις) or itself (ἑαυτὴν) were the sort of issues with which the Stoics, more so than the Epicureans or the Peripatetics, were concerned.²⁸¹ The οἰκείωσις theory, for

²⁷⁸ The term ὄγκος strictly speaking means weight or volume. However, in this context Sextus is clearly using it to denote the outward physical body, as opposed to, say, the pneumatic body which is the intellect.

²⁷⁹ Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos, VII 303. Trans: 'Yes, say the Dogmatists, but the intellect discerns both the body, the senses and itself.' All Sextus passages, unless stated otherwise, are based upon the Bekker text, Sextus Empiricus, Opera, ed. I. Bekker (Berlin: Reimer, 1842). All other passages (and translations) in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are taken from or based upon A.A. Long and David Sedley, The Hellenistic Philosophers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) which I shall hereafter refer to as L&S.

²⁸⁰ However, it would be misleading to imply this terminology is exclusively Stoic. For instance, the term ὄγκος is also used by Epicurus, see L&S 7B and 12D.

²⁸¹ I restrict my claim to 'more so' because it would be untrue to say that the Epicureans and Peripatetics

example, examines the manner in which animals, human or otherwise, are aware of themselves, with special emphasis on their outward bodies. Epictetus, in his Discourses, explores how it is that the intellectual faculty can be its own object. And, finally, the paradox of the sage (the elusive argument) centres around how the sage's knowledge can itself be an object of knowledge. So the issues which Sextus' touches upon in his attack are issues which are not in any way alien to Stoic epistemology.

As for (iii), Sextus' presupposition of materialism, this can be discerned from all three parts of his attack. However, it is most apparent with, and central to, the third and final part. Nonetheless, I must say something about the two previous parts, the intellect knowing the outward body (τὸν ὄγκον) and the intellect knowing the senses (τάς αἰσθήσεις), because the manner in which Sextus dismisses both will, in part, recur in the third part. For in the third criticism, as in these two, Sextus makes much use of the identity relation between the intellectual subject and its object. (And, as we shall see, it is just this relation which undermined the coherency of the Stoics' account of the intellect.) According to Sextus' argument, such a relation entails that the thinker or thinking part of the soul become identical with its object and, as a result, ceases to be rational.²⁸² For the objects in question, the outward body or the senses, are non-rational. That Sextus emphasises such an identity relation between the intellectual subject and its objects, something which has Aristotelian and Peripatetic echoes, does not tell against my claim that it is the Stoics to whom he directs his criticism. For the context in which he deploys this identity relation between the subject and object (i.e. the intellect becoming the outward body or the senses) is one of materialism, and to that extent Stoic. For an Aristotelian might worry how the intellect could become identical with its proper objects, the intelligibles, but he would not be concerned with whether or not the intellect could become identical with the other faculties or the body. However, for the Stoic,

were not interested in these sorts of issues *simpliciter*. For Alexander of Aphrodisias in his De Anima Commentary (86, 17ff.) discusses how the intellect incidentally thinks itself (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) in thinking its proper objects. For a discussion of this point in relation to Plotinus, see Gerard J.P. O'Daly, Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1973), pp. 79-80. As for Epicurus, he discusses how the soul requires the body, or rather must be part of the aggregate of atoms, if it is to think or have sensation. The only incorporeal is the void and that cannot be thought. However, his primary interest in that passage from his Letter to Herodotus is to explain how the soul must be corporeal and not how it knows itself or the senses. See L&S 14A.

²⁸² Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos, VII 304-5.

Sextus' concerns do pose a problem because all three (intellect, the senses and the outward body) are bodies, material masses, just differently qualified. Thus an identity relation between different bodies would entail one body taking on all the attributes of the other, and, in the process, losing its own, assuming they were different from those of the body with which it has become identical.

Yet, as I am primarily interested in the intellect's grasp of itself *qua* intellect and not the awareness it has of the outward body or the other faculties, those attacks which were premised upon the intellect's acquisition of non-rational or non-intellectual properties are not relevant. For the third part of Sextus' original attack concentrates on the intellect knowing itself (ἐαυτὴν γνωρίζει). However, Sextus demands that the identity of the subject with the object entails that the subject take on all the properties of its object of thought, and this includes the generic property of being an 'object'. Thus, according to Sextus' argument, a consequence of the subject becoming identical with its object (regardless of whether that object is rational or not) is that it, the subject, ceases to be a subject:

ἀλλ' εἴπερ ἡ γνωρίζουσα τὰς αἰσθήσεις διάνοια εὐρίσκεται εἰς τὴν ἐκείνων μεταβεβηκυῖα φύσιν, οὐδὲν ἔστι ἔτι ὑποκείμενον τὸ ζητοῦν τὰς αἰσθήσεις· ὃ γὰρ ὑπεθέμεθα ζητεῖν, τοῦτο ἀναπέφηνε τὸ αὐτὸ ταῖς ζητουμέναις, διὰ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ χρῆζον τοῦ καταληψομένου.²⁸³

This aspect of the identity relation (the subject ceasing to be a subject by becoming an object) carries over from the first two parts of Sextus' attack to the third. It is a problem which goes right to the heart of any account of self-intellection: Is it possible for a theory of self-intellection to incorporate an identity relation between the subject and object and survive as a coherent theory of self-intellection? If it cannot and if this problem, as outlined by Sextus, is insurmountable, then any theory of self-intellection is in serious trouble, with the result that the intellect becomes an anomalous entity.

Now the manner in which Sextus deals with the problem of self-intellection betrays, more than his previous two attacks, his presupposition of materialism. For the force of this attack is most effective against an opponent who adheres to such a view.

²⁸³ Sextus Empiricus, *ibid.*, VII 306-7. Trans: 'But if the intellect that discerns the senses is found to have passed over into their nature, there will no longer exist any subject which seeks to know the senses; for that which we assumed to be seeking has turned out to be identical with the senses sought, and consequently in need of something to apprehend it.'

The critique itself is twofold: There is the part/part scenario and the whole/whole scenario:

εἴπερ γὰρ ὁ νοῦς ἑαυτὸν καταλαμβάνεται, ἥτοι ὅλος μὲν ἑαυτὸν καταλήπεται, ἢ ὅλος μὲν οὐδαμῶς μέρει δέ τινι ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς τοῦτο χρώμενος.²⁸⁴

Either way, Sextus maintains, the intellect cannot sustain a relation in which it has itself as an object of intellection. But as the part/part account is premised upon the objection just raised about the identity relation between the subject and object, it is the more appropriate of the two with which to begin.

According to Sextus, the problem with the part/part account is that it is vulnerable to an infinite regress:

εἰ δὲ μέρει τινί, ἐκεῖνο πάλιν πῶς ἑαυτὸ γνώσεται; καὶ οὕτως εἰς ἄπειρον.²⁸⁵

His reasoning for such a claim goes something like this: When the thinker thinks its object, it, the thinker, becomes identical to that object. Now unlike the earlier instances in which the object of the intellect was of a different nature, or at least differently qualified, (the outward body or a different faculty), here one part of the intellect thinks another part, and thus there is no danger of the intellect ceasing to be intellectual. But can the intellect, when viewed as parts, both satisfy the subject/object distinction and think itself? According to Sextus, it cannot. For he takes the view, as already noted, that when intellect becomes identical with its object, it ceases to be a subject altogether. The apprehendor and its act (καταλαμβάνον) collapse into the apprehended (καταλαμβανόμενον).²⁸⁶ And if that is the case, then another part of the intellect, i.e. another thinking subject, will be required to think the object into which the previous subject collapsed. Of course, that part too will suffer the same fate and so on *ad infinitum*. From this Sextus infers that no first subject will be found or if there is, given the transition involved in the intellectual process, it will not be able to entertain an object. And so the process of one part of the intellect apprehending another part of itself is insufficient to accommodate a theory of self-intellection.

²⁸⁴ Sextus Empiricus, *ibid.*, VII 310-311. Trans: 'For if the mind apprehends itself, either it as a whole will apprehend itself, or it will do so not as a whole but employing for the purpose a part of itself.'

²⁸⁵ Sextus Empiricus, *ibid.*, VII 312. Trans: 'while if with a part, how will that part in turn discern itself? And so on to infinity.'

²⁸⁶ Sextus Empiricus, *ibid.*, VII 309.

But is Sextus right to hold such a view? He is if both parts are placed on the same ontological level and subject to an identity thesis in which the subject-part becomes identical with the object-part, i.e. is subsumed by the latter. In other words, he is treating the parts in exactly the same way as an out and out materialist would treat them. Each part is a separate and distinct material entity, a body, and one of them, i.e. the subject, is supposed to become identical with the other (including in number and place). Of course, at that point there will only be one body, the object, and thus the need for another subject, so on *ad infinitum*. By treating the epistemic subject and object as two distinct entities which are on a par and which are subject to an identity relation within the intellect, Sextus makes it impossible to accommodate self-intellection. For one of these entities in thinking the other ceases to be.

Now, if a part of the intellect cannot think another part without inviting a regress, at least the way in which Sextus treats the parts, let us see if the whole/whole account of self-intellection fares any better. On the face it, the whole/whole reading looks rather promising. For presumably, if qualified properly, a plurality of epistemic dispositions, such as being an intellectual subject and an intelligible object, could inhere in and permeate throughout the intellect simultaneously. This is how one might describe the manner in which the several faculties permeate throughout the entire soul. Or to take a more mundane example, this is the manner in which yellow and sweet simultaneously inhere in and permeate the entire body of honey.²⁸⁷ However, according to Sextus, the whole/whole account cannot tolerate that sort of mutual compatibility or cohabitation, at least as far as the epistemic dispositions of subjecthood and objecthood are concerned. Instead our author takes the view that the whole/whole reading entails a thinker, a subject, which does not have anything, i.e. an object, to think. For unlike the part/part account which ended with the demise of the subject in favour of the object, now we have a subject which, because it is the whole, has nothing to think:

καὶ ὅλος μὲν ἑαυτὸν καταλαμβάνεσθαι οὐκ ἂν δυνηθείη. εἰ γὰρ ὅλος ἑαυτὸν καταλαμβάνεται, ὅλος ἔσται κατάληψις καὶ καταλαμβάνων, ὅλου δ' ὄντος τοῦ καταλαμβάνοντος οὐδὲν ἔτι ἔσται τὸ καταλαμβανόμενον· τῶν δὲ ἀλογωτάτων ἐστὶ τὸ εἶναι μὲν τὸν καταλαμβάνοντα, μὴ εἶναι δὲ τὸ οὗ ἐστὶν ἡ κατάληψις.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ cf. L&S 53K.

²⁸⁸ Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII 311-12. Trans: 'Now it will not be able as a whole to

According to this account, as soon as the subject is posited as the whole, the object is ruled out. Hence, the whole/whole account might prevent the subject from being subsumed by the object, but it does so at the expense of having an object.

But is Sextus fair to claim this, i.e. that as soon as the subject is put forth as a whole, the object is ruled out? In other words, is Sextus correct to claim that the subject and object cannot coexist *qua* wholes? Again, Sextus' argument is valid within the context of materialism. For if one treats the subject as a material entity which is on the same ontological plane as its opposite and is supposed to be the whole, then the subject *qua* whole is exclusive of the object *qua* whole. For the notion of there being two things, i.e. two bodies, each being equal in ontological status, each being a whole and each being in the same place (which is required since the intellect is a body), is incompatible with the idea of their coexistence.²⁸⁹

Thus what allows Sextus' attack to work in both of its guises is his treatment of the epistemic subject and object as two distinct entities which exist on the same ontological level. Again, this is exactly what one would expect from a strong or extreme materialist. That is, someone who holds the epistemic subject and its object to be physical entities, with the result that either the subject is eclipsed by the object (part/part) or the object by the subject (whole/whole). In the case of the former, one part becomes the other; and in the case of the latter, the object gives way to the subject because only one physical body can occupy a place at any given time. Sextus' paradox, therefore, employs a basic assumption of a strong materialist: there is only one ontological level. Consequently, a coherent theory of self-intellection is ruled out because the only possible identity relation is that of simple self-identity, i.e. the trivial relation in which something is identical with itself, as opposed to, say, the relation in which the subject has itself as an object of thought.

apprehend itself. For if as a whole it apprehends itself, it will be as a whole apprehension and apprehending, and, the apprehending subject being the whole, the apprehended object will no longer be anything; but it is a thing most irrational that the apprehending subject should exist while the object of the apprehension does not exist.'

²⁸⁹ cf. Aristotle *Metaph.* 1039a2-14 on the impossibility of one substance existing or being in the same place as another.

II Stoic Epistemology

Having stressed the materialism and the Stoic background which underlies Sextus' paradox, an examination of Stoic epistemology is now necessary.²⁹⁰ For only when their epistemology, along with its materialistic core, is accounted for, can one fully appreciate why the Stoics approach intellectual self-apprehension in the manner that they do and why the notion of the sage's self-knowledge is a paradoxical one.

The Stoics regard the soul, including the intellect, as a corporeal entity.²⁹¹ Their adherence to such a materialistic view is, at least in part, motivated by their causal account of things. Only corporeal things, according to them, can act or suffer affections, while incorporeal ones cannot:

τὸ γὰρ ἀσώματον κατ' αὐτοὺς οὔτε ποιεῖν τι πέφυκεν οὔτε
πάσχειν.²⁹²

So if, as the Stoics go on to argue, the soul is capable of undergoing affection, it will have to be somatic. And, likewise, as it is only the corporeal which can act, any object which affects the soul or the body must also be corporeal:

ἔτι [sc. Cleanthes] φησὶν· οὐδὲν ἀσώματον συμπάσχει σώματι, οὐδὲ
ἀσώματῳ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ σῶμα σώματι· συμπάσχει δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ
σώματι νοσοῦντι καὶ τεμνομένῳ, καὶ τὸ σῶμα τῇ ψυχῇ·
αἰσχυνομένης γοῦν ἐρυθρὸν γίνεται καὶ φοβουμένης ὠχρὸν· σῶμα
ἄρα ἡ ψυχὴ.²⁹³

Given the materialistic setting in which this causal relation is located, the relation entails that there be two distinct and separate bodies, one acting and one being acted upon.

What are the objects of the intellectual part of the soul, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν? The most obvious candidate is sensible substances out there in the world:

²⁹⁰ I must stress that although much of what the Stoics have to say about the intellect generally is situated within an ethical context, it does not follow from that that the Stoics have nothing to add to the present epistemological enterprise. If anything, much of their ethical interests are actually driven by epistemological ones. Cf. A.A. Long, Hellenistic Philosophy (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1974), pp. 185-6 and M.M. Mackenzie, 'The Virtues of Socratic Ignorance', Classical Quarterly 38 (1988), pp. 148-150.

²⁹¹ Cicero, De Natura Deorum Academica 1.39 (Hereafter referred to as Academica.)

²⁹² L&S 45B (Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos VIII 262-263). Trans: 'According to them [the Stoics] the incorporeal is not of a nature either to act or be acted upon.'

²⁹³ L&S 45C (Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, 1.518, hereafter referred to as SVE.). Trans: 'He [Cleanthes] also says: no incorporeal interacts with a body, and no body with an incorporeal, but one body interacts with another body. Now the soul interacts with the body when it is sick and being cut, and the body with the soul; thus when the soul feels shame and fear the body turns red and pale respectively. Therefore the soul is a body.'

οἱ Στωικοὶ τὰ μέν πάθη ἐν τοῖς πεπονθόσι τόποις, τὰς δὲ αἰσθήσεις
ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ.²⁹⁴

Sensible objects, or rather their sensible content, act upon the intellect by means of φαντασίαι. However, aesthetic φαντασίαι -- those which convey sensible content -- are not the only type of φαντασίαι which the intellect encounters. There are dianoetic or intellectual ones as well:

τῶν δὲ φαντασιῶν κατ' αὐτούς αἱ μέν εἰσιν αἰσθητικάι, αἱ δ' οὐ·
αἰσθητικάι μέν αἱ δι' αἰσθητηρίου ἢ αἰσθητηρίων λαμβανόμεναι,
οὐκ αἰσθητικάι δ' αἱ διὰ τῆς διανοίας καθάπερ τῶν ἁσωμάτων καὶ
τῶν ἄλλων τῶν λόγῳ λαμβανομένων.²⁹⁵

But let me stay with the aesthetic or sensory φαντασίαι for the moment, not only because they play a more obvious role in the causal relation which has been outlined thus far but also because they take priority over the intellectual φαντασίαι both temporally and logically.²⁹⁶

Sensible objects through kataleptic (cognitive) impressions affect the intellect. A kataleptic impression imposes an accurate representation of the sensible object upon it, the intellect, resulting in some sort of physical alteration of the latter.²⁹⁷ For the object, the φανταστόν,²⁹⁸ fully impresses itself in such a way that its unique combination of properties is felt by the intellect via the impression.²⁹⁹ Without entering the debate over whether or not kataleptic impressions are distinguishable from non-kataleptic ones and whether they can be used as the criteria for true perceptual statements, the point I want to emphasise is that it is the kataleptic impression itself that does the work.³⁰⁰ For it arises from or is caused by an existent somatic entity and is

²⁹⁴ L&S 53M (SVF. 2.854). Trans: 'The Stoics say that [bodily] affections occur in the affected regions, but the sensations in the commanding faculty.'

²⁹⁵ L&S 39A (Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae*, VII 51). Trans: 'They divide impressions into those which are sensory and those which are not. Sensory impressions are ones obtained through one or more sense-organs, non-sensory are ones obtained through thought such as those of incorporeals and of the other things acquired by reason.'

²⁹⁶ cf. L&S 39A and E. Also cf. A.A. Long, 'Language and Thought in Stoicism', *Problems in Stoicism*, ed. A.A. Long (London: Athlone Press, 1971), p. 94.

²⁹⁷ As for the ancient debate between Chrysippus and Cleanthes over the exact the nature of the physical alteration, cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII 227-331.

²⁹⁸ L&S 39B (SVF. 2.54).

²⁹⁹ cf. M. Frede, 'Clear and Distinct Impressions', *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 167. This need not mean that all the properties of the object are felt but just a sufficient number so that the uniqueness of the object is impressed upon the perceiver. Cf. Cicero, *Academica*, 1.42 and J. Annas, 'Truth and Knowledge', *Doubt and Dogmatism*, edd. M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat and J. Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 88.

³⁰⁰ As Annas points out, the problem with attributing a coherence theory to the Stoics is that, despite

stamped and impressed in exact accordance with that entity:

καταληπτική δέ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπὸ ὑπάπαρχοντος καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ
ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη, ὅποια οὐκ ἂν
γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος.³⁰¹

As a result, it is not a question of the perceiver discerning that ϕ_1 is a kataleptic impression and ϕ_2 is not. Rather ϕ_1 , in virtue of the accurate manner in which it depicts the object (i.e. acting as the perfect vehicle), impresses the perceiver's ἡγεμονικόν in such a way as to reveal its "katalepticity" to him or her.

Although, *prima facie*, cognitive or kataleptic impressions are about perception and perceptual content and not about how the intellectual part of the soul relates to purely intellectual objects, it is still relevant to my study of the intellect because it is the intellectual part of the soul which is undergoing these affections. For the ἡγεμονικόν is one of the necessary conditions for the occurrence of this perceptual phenomenon:

ἵνα γε μὴν αἰσθητικὴ γένηται φαντασία κατ' αὐτούς, οἷον ὁρατικὴ,
δεῖ πέντε συνδραμεῖν, τό τε αἰσθητήριον καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν καὶ τὸν
τόπον καὶ τὸ πῶς καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν, ὥς ἐὰν τῶν ἄλλων παρόντων ἐν
μόνον ἀπῇ, καθάπερ διάνοια παρὰ φύσιν ἔχουσα, οὐ σωθήσεται,
φασίν, ἢ ἀντίληψις.³⁰²

Thus two relations hold between the intellectual part of the soul and the perceptible object(s). (i) This part of the soul is an intellectual subject because it is that thing which undergoes the affection and does the apprehending. And being in such a state entails that it is related to objects. Moreover, the same applies to the object. For the object is only such when it is working upon a subject. Thus the subject and object enjoy a coextensive relation: The subject is only such when it is being acted upon by an object and *vice versa*. (ii) The perceptual content of the objects in the world -- with the assistance of the

solving certain problems, the external world drops out. This is not to say that the correspondence theory has no problems either. Its shortcomings, for instance, can be felt when dealing with the question of ὀρθὸς λόγος. See J. Annas, 'Truth and Knowledge', p. 93.

³⁰¹ L&S 40E (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII 248). Trans: 'A cognitive impression is one which arises from what is and is stamped and impressed exactly in accordance with what is, of such a kind as could not arise from what is not.' In the face of the Sceptics' attack on the kataleptic impressions and whether they were properly distinguishable from non-kataleptic impressions, the Stoics added the further proviso that the perceiving subject be in a normal state capable of proper perception, e.g. not be insane or inebriated.

³⁰² L&S 40L (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII 424). Trans: 'For a [cognitive] sense impression to occur, e.g. one of sight, five factors in their [the Stoics'] view must concur: the sense-organ, the sense-object, the place, the manner and the mind; since if all of these but one are present (e.g. if the mind is in an abnormal state), the perception, they say, will not be secured.'

φαντασία -- act upon, i.e. causally affect, the intellect. Thus there is also a causal relation between the two, the intellect and the perceptual content.

However, to say the ἡγεμονικόν is an intellectual subject and that it is affected by perceptual content is by no means a complete account of the role of the ἡγεμονικόν. Attention should also be drawn to the distinction which Diogenes Laertius introduces on behalf of the Stoics, after his two-fold description of φαντασίαι (quoted above, L&S 39A, n. 18). Here he remarks that the Stoics regarded all human impressions, aisthetic or otherwise, to be rational and thus involve the intellect in some way:

ἔτι τῶν φαντασιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι λογικαί, αἱ δὲ ἄλογοι· λογικαὶ μὲν αἱ τῶν λογικῶν ζῴων, ἄλογοι δὲ αἱ τῶν ἀλόγων. αἱ μὲν οὖν λογικαὶ νοήσεις εἰσίν, αἱ δ' ἄλογοι οὐ τετυχήκασιν ὀνόματος.³⁰³

So just as animals are divided into the rational and the non-rational, so too are impressions. And we, as rational animals, are incapable of entertaining exclusively non-rational impressions.³⁰⁴ It would seem, therefore, to follow that all our aisthetic impressions are rational (λογικαί).³⁰⁵ Diogenes' proof for such a claim takes the following form: The only likely candidate for non-rational impressions from all of our impressions is the aisthetic impression. But it does not qualify since it has a name, i.e. aisthetic. For non-rational impressions, according to Diogenes, do not have a name (οὐ τετυχήκασιν ὀνόματος). So either our aisthetic impressions are not exclusively non-rational or Diogenes will have to revise his original claim and say that non-rational impressions can sometimes have a name, i.e. aisthetic.³⁰⁶ This view (i.e. that the Stoics considered all human impressions, aisthetic or otherwise, to be rational) can, I think, be further substantiated from a passage in Cicero's Academica:

atqui qualia sunt haec quae sensibus percipi dicimus talia secuntur ea

³⁰³ L&S 39A (Diogenes Laertius, Vitae, VII 51). Trans: 'Furthermore, some impressions are rational, others are non-rational. Those of rational animals are rational, and those of non-rational animals are non-rational. Rational impressions are thought processes; irrational ones are nameless.'

³⁰⁴ For a different view cf. A.A. Long, 'Language and Thought in Stoicism', p. 83.

³⁰⁵ When I speak of aisthetic impressions in this context, I am excluding children and their impressions, since the Stoics maintain that under the age of seven or fourteen (depending on whom you read) humans are not rational animals. Cf. B. Inwood, 'Hierocles: Theory and Argument in the Second Century AD', Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, vol. II (1984), p.174 and S. Pembroke, 'Oikeiosis', Problems in Stoicism, ed. A.A. Long (London: Athlone Press, 1971), p. 117.

³⁰⁶ I am not trying to imply that animals do not have structured impressions but simply that their aisthetic impression, albeit structured or not, are different from our aisthetic ones.

quae non sensibus ipsis percipi dicuntur sed quodam modo³⁰⁷ sensibus,
ut haec: 'illud est album, hoc dulce, canorum illud, hoc bene olens, hoc
asperum': animo iam haec tenemus comprehensa non sensibus.³⁰⁸

For this passage would seem to imply that no matter how basic one of our perceptions might *prima facie* appear to be, in fact they are of a rational (λογική) structure. In the case of adult humans, it is always the mind and not the senses (animo ... non sensibus) by which grasps things. But what does mean it to say they are rational or grasped by the mind? It means, I think, all of our impressions come before the ἡγεμονικόν or affect the ἡγεμονικόν in a conceptualised form.³⁰⁹ Thus, given the type of animal the human being is, whenever it has an aesthetic impression -- no matter how primitive -- the relevant concepts from his set of concepts³¹⁰ automatically take effect, with the result that the objects of our impressions affect the perceiving subject in a rational form. In other words, perception is cognitive activity. In virtue of this conceptualised form, impressions naturally lend themselves to being thought and articulated.³¹¹

Given the above account, it is clear the intellectual part of the soul is acted upon by the perceptible object. The ἡγεμονικόν is affected by external perceptual objects. It is not, I stress, identical with those objects out there in the world but rather

³⁰⁷ In recent scholarship, there has been some debate as to the proper rendering 'quodam modo'. Richard Sorabji, for example, takes the view that 'quodam modo' means the senses can perceive 'in a way' that something is white in such a way as to exclude reason altogether. He takes this line to defend the view that animals can and do have structured perceptions despite the fact that the intellect is not actually present. Cf. R.R.K. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals* (London: Duckworth Books, 1994), p. 25. Long and Sedley, however, maintain that the 'quodam modo' is referring to proleptic φαντασίαι. This account runs as follows: The mind develops proleptic φαντασίαι from a plurality of kataleptic φαντασίαι. Hence when it employs the proleptic φαντασίαι, inasmuch as it is focusing its attention upon them, it is not focusing its attention on a direct and immediate external sense object. Although, indirectly or 'in a certain sense' (hence the 'quodam modo'), it is using external sense objects insofar as proleptic φαντασίαι are based on previous perceptions of those external sense objects. Now if such a reading is the correct one, there would be no need to claim, as Sorabji does, that this passage is not Stoic.

³⁰⁸ L&S 39C (Cicero *Academia*, II.21). Trans: 'Those characteristics which belong to the things we describe as being cognised by the senses are equally characteristic of that further set of things said to be cognised not by the senses directly but by them in a certain respect, e.g., "That is white, this is white, this is sweet, that is melodious, this is fragrant, this is bitter." Our cognition of these is secured by the mind not by the senses.'

³⁰⁹ See L&S, p. 240 (vol. I). Gisela Striker speaks of our aesthetic impressions as being transformed into propositions by an automatic translation. G. Striker, 'Epicurus on the Truth of Sense-Impressions', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* Band 59 (1977), p. 134. Also cf. Julia Annas, 'Truth and Knowledge', p. 88.

³¹⁰ These would be our proleptic concepts which are developed from our kataleptic impressions. We employ the former in all of our aesthetic impressions.

³¹¹ cf. L&S 33C, D and F. There is some debate as to whether these impressions are articulable but not necessarily so or that, in fact, language is necessarily presupposed. For the former view, see C. Gill, 'Is there a concept of person in Greek philosophy', *Companions to Greek Thought, II Psychology*, ed. S. Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 187-8. For the latter view, see A.A. Long, 'Hellenistic Philosophy', p. 124 and L&S, p. 240 (vol. I).

has its physical pneumatic disposition altered by them. The reason I stress identity in the context of the intellectual part of the soul and its impressions is that if there is to be an account of self-intellection, i.e. an account in which the intellect is its own object of intellection, it, the intellect, will somehow have to be identical with its own object. And since its objects take the form of impressions, it is at least likely therefore that it will have to be an impression. That said, let us now refocus on intellectual impressions and see what sort of relation holds between the intellectual subject and these objects.

Now the type of φαντασία I have in mind by intellectual is the λεκτόν, the sayable. According to the Stoics, the λεκτόν appears concurrently and subsists (ὑφιστάμενον) in accordance with the rational impression.³¹² The former supervenes on the latter. Given the causal constraints which were laid down at the outset, the λεκτόν as an asomatic φαντασία is itself incapable of acting upon or being acted upon by the intellectual part of the soul. It cannot bring about an affection in the ἡγεμονικόν. However, simply because it cannot enter into a causal relation with the intellect, it does not follow that the intellect has absolutely no relation to these impressions. For Zeno does say that while the intellect cannot be acted upon *by them* (οὐχ ὑπ' αὐτῶν), it can act *in relation* (ἐπ' αὐτοῖς) to them:

... ἔνια δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχει φύσιν, τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς
φαντασιουμένου καὶ οὐχ ὑπ' αὐτῶν, ὅποιά ἐστι τὰ ἀσώματα
λεκτά.³¹³

How are we to understand the force of 'ἐπ'?' It is used differently from the way Plato uses it in Republic Book V (Chapter II) because there the objects in question were capable of directly affecting their appropriate faculty. In this context it would seem that the intellect, having been affected by a somatic entity, in the process of fully apprehending that object makes reference to the λεκτά that subsist in accordance with that entity. And so it, the intellect, can be said to act *in relation* to the asomatic entity. In other words, it is part of the process of the intellect's apprehension of the somatic entity to refer to the λεκτά which map onto that causally related impression.

Given that the relation between the intellect and the λεκτά is a referential

³¹² cf. L&S 33C and F.

³¹³ L&S 27E (Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos, VIII 409-410). Trans: '... whereas others have a nature like that of the incorporeal sayables, and the commanding-faculty is impressed in relation to them and not by them.'

one, it, like its sensory counterpart, does not tell us too much about identity.³¹⁴ The intellect might be identical with the physical -- pneumatic -- alteration (which is simply to say that the intellect *qua* pneumatic body is identical with itself) but it is not identical with the λεκτά, just as much as it is not identical with the object which caused the sensory impression. The only identity relation that is even remotely discernible thus far with respect to the intellectual subject is the trivial identity claim that the intellectual subject is self-identical.³¹⁵ As it stands, the account of the intellect is such that the intellect does not become identical with its object and, consequently, self-intellection is not a relation which the above epistemological account can accommodate.

III Self-Awareness and Light

Perhaps, self-intellection with respect to the Stoics is a misplaced theory or notion. Perhaps, the intellect or the intellectual part of the soul, instead of having itself as a direct or first-order object of thought, has some sort of concomitant or second-order awareness of itself, in which it is not an object of knowledge like other objects of knowledge. Now, if such a view can be shown to be Stoic, then Sextus' paradox will be entirely spurious, since it assumes the intellect knows itself as a first-order object.

With a view to discerning this second-order awareness, I want to turn to two passages in particular, one by Aëtius and another by Antiochus, an Academic who is said to have held Stoic views.³¹⁶ For these passages, *prima facie*, actually do seem to attribute a second-order or concomitant awareness to the ἡγεμονικόν. Taking Aëtius first, we read:

φαντασία μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ πάθος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γιγνόμενον, ἐνδεικνύμενον
αὐτό τε καὶ τὸ πεποιηκός· οἷον ἐπειδὴν δι' ὅψεως θεωρῶμεν τὸ

³¹⁴ As noted by A.A. Long, for the Stoics, the intellect's knowledge does not involve identity. See A.A. Long, 'Language and Thought in Stoicism', p. 83.

³¹⁵ As for other mental entities, such as concepts or universals (ἐννοήματα), they do not even qualify as φαντασίαι but are instead φαντάσματα, i.e. figments, quasi-real entities. (L&S 30A-C. Also cf. A.A. Long, 'Language and Thought in Stoicism', p. 110.) According to the Stoics, they are the 'intentional content' of conceptions (ἐννοιαί), the latter being physical/pneumatic dispositions of the intellect. (For the distinction between ἐννοια [conception] and the concept [ἐννοήμα], see A.A. Long, 'Language and Thought in Stoicism', p. 110.) Like λεκτά, ἐννοήματα would also seem to supervene upon the physical, in this case the ἐννοιαί. Hence here too, the only identity relation that can be discerned is the intellect's self-identity with its physical dispositions.

³¹⁶ Sextus Empiricus, Outlines of Pyrrhonism. I 235.

λευκόν, ἔστι πάθος τὸ ἐγγεγεννημένον διὰ τῆς ὀράσεως ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ.
καὶ (κατὰ) τοῦτο τὸ πάθος εἰπεῖν ἔχομεν, ὅτι ὑπόκειται λευκὸν
κινεῖν ἡμᾶς.³¹⁷

And similarly with Antiochus we get the same two-fold account:

κατὰ μέντοι τὴν τοιαύτην ἀλλοιώσιν δεῖν ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα, ἐνὸς
μὲν αὐτῆς τῆς ἀλλοιώσεως, τουτέστι τῆς φαντασίας, δευτέρου δὲ
τοῦ τὴν ἀλλοιώσιν ἐμποιήσαντος τουτέστι τοῦ ὀρατοῦ.³¹⁸

According to both passages, it would seem that the perceptual act consists of a two-fold awareness.³¹⁹ First there is the awareness of the content of the impression, i.e. the object which originally activates the impression. And then comes the awareness of the impression itself, which is an awareness of oneself *qua* intellectual patient. For awareness of the impression involves being aware of the intellect disposed in a certain manner, namely impressed upon or affected. To be aware of the impression entails being aware of oneself *qua* affected intellectual subject. The perceptual act, therefore, could be said to involve a concomitant or second-order self-awareness in which there is an awareness of the object and a simultaneous awareness -- to which the first-order awareness gives rise -- of oneself as the intellectual patient.³²⁰ And if that is the case, then one might very easily argue that the notion of self-intellection, at least as far as the Stoics are concerned, is superfluous and that Sextus has attacked a straw man.

I would argue, however, that, as with the earlier discussion of self-consciousness (De Anima 3.2, Chapter IV), here too we have an object-oriented awareness in which any second-order or concomitant awareness (in this case the awareness the intellect has of itself *qua* patient) is really nothing over and above the first-order awareness, i.e. the awareness of the object. For the φαντασία, if it is to be a φαντασία in the proper sense of the word, must be a perfect, fully effective, vehicle,

³¹⁷ L&S 39B (SVF. 2.54). Trans: 'An impression is an affection occurring in the soul, which reveals itself and its cause. Thus, when through sight we observe something white, the affection is what is engendered in the soul through vision; and it is this affection which enables us to say that there is a white object which activates us.'

³¹⁸ L&S 70A (Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos, VII 162). Trans: 'But on the basis of this kind of alteration we register two things: one, the alteration itself, i.e. the impression, the other thing which produced the alteration in us, i.e. the object seen.'

³¹⁹ Regardless of whether one takes Antiochus' account as an accurate portrayal of the Stoic position, Aëtius is usually considered to be a pretty safe Stoic source. So we at least know that such a view is authentically Stoic.

³²⁰ Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos, VII 236. This is one reason Sextus says we are not aware of ourselves because if we were, we would know where the affection occurs, meaning where the intellect is. But since some say the head and others the heart, it is obvious that we do not actually know the place and thus are not properly aware of ourselves. See Sextus Empiricus, ibid., VII 312.

caused by and acting in exact accordance with some externally given object. In virtue of the role allotted to the φαντασία, the awareness which the subject has of itself amounts to nothing more than the fact that it, the subject, is conscious of perceiving an object. In other words, this supposed second-order awareness, which is constitutive of the soul's awareness of itself *qua* intellectual patient, is really just an awareness of the content of the φαντασία. Thus the self-awareness in question is in fact an awareness of the representation of the external object that is conveyed by the φαντασία.

This line of interpretation is borne out, I think, if one continues with the two passages just quoted. For they both go on to make the same point with the help of the light metaphor. Taking Aëtius first, we read:

εἴρηται δὲ ἡ φαντασία ἀπὸ τοῦ φωτός· καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ φῶς αὐτὸ δείκνυσι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ περιεχόμενα, καὶ ἡ φαντασία δείκνυσιν ἑαυτὴν καὶ τὸ πεποιηκὸς αὐτήν.³²¹

And so too with Antiochus:

ὥσπερ οὖν τὸ φῶς ἑαυτὸ τε δείκνυσι καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, οὕτω καὶ ἡ φαντασία, ἀρχηγὸς οὖσα τῆς περὶ τὸ ζῶον εἰδήσεως, φωτὸς δίκην ἑαυτὴν τε ἐμφανίζειν ὀφείλει καὶ τοῦ ποιήσαντος αὐτήν ἐναργοῦς ἐνδεικτικὴ καθεστάναι.³²²

Because the φαντασία is supposed to be like or to enjoy the same status as light in the visual process, the point of the metaphor, it could be argued, is to emphasise that one is aware of it, the φαντασία, inasmuch as one is aware of the content which is conveyed by it. That is, the awareness of the light is constituted out of and defined by the content which it conveys. For the primary awareness is of the content. Moreover, just as light does not constitute a second visual object which acts on the faculty of sight, likewise the awareness of the φαντασία does not constitute a separate object-oriented awareness in its own right, say a self-awareness. For that awareness is inextricably tied to the awareness of the object which the φαντασία, if it is doing its job properly, conveys. Hence to be aware of the φαντασία is to be aware of the object for which it is acting as a vehicle. All this is to say that the act of perceiving an object has built into it, or has as

³²¹ L&S 39B (SVE. 2.54). Trans: 'The word 'impression' [phantasia] is derived from 'light' [phôs]: just as light reveals itself and whatever else it includes in its range, so impression reveals itself and its cause.'

³²² L&S 70A (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII 163). Trans: 'Hence just as light shows up both itself and all things in it, so too the impression, as the prime mover of the animal's knowledge, must in the manner of light both show up itself and be capable of revealing the self-evident object that caused it.'

an intrinsic element, the awareness or consciousness that one is perceiving something, without creating a second distinct concomitant awareness.³²³

Having deflated the role allotted to light as a proper distinct object of awareness, this much must be said in favour of their use of light. These examples go farther than Aristotle's use of the light metaphor in De Anima 3.5 (Chapter IV). For there, Aristotle spoke of light as simply being that in virtue of which potential colours were able to have their potentiality *qua* visible objects realised. Here, the Stoics actually speak of an awareness of the light itself. However, they only posit the awareness in relation to and define it by the content conveyed, and do not pursue it as a serious means through which to give an account of intellectual self-apprehension, thereby undermining its significance. Thus, Sextus' paradox, at least as far as this sort of concomitant awareness is concerned, is not misapplied. However, the paradox which arises from the combination of trying to give an account of self-intellection within materialism was not only recognised as a problem by Sextus. The Stoics were also sensitive to there being a problem; a problem which took the form of the elusive argument.

IV Paradox of the Sage

This paradox asks whether or not the Stoic sage can have self-knowledge; whether or not the state or disposition of the sage's ἡγεμονικόν, i.e. the body of his knowledge, can itself be an object of the ἡγεμονικόν. Now, when the wise man has amassed the entire body of knowledge, i.e. when his knowledge is complete,³²⁴ at that point he is supposed to switch from being ignorant to being wise.³²⁵ But as the Stoics regard the wise man's knowledge of his own wisdom to be a piece of knowledge like any other, i.e. a perceptible object, if his body of knowledge is to be complete (which it must be if he is

³²³ A comparison with the Cyrenaics proves interesting at this point because they maintained that the criteria of truth have nothing to do with objects out there in the world but rather are based upon the affections in us. (See Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos, VII 191.) In other words, their primary objects are not the things out there in the world but the affections themselves which inhere within us. In a sense all they have done is moved the objects within but at a price, viz. the loss of the external world. The relevant point for us, however, is that whichever way you choose, there can only be one object.

³²⁴ cf. SVE. 3.548.

³²⁵ cf. L&S 61T (SVE. 3.539).

to be wise), then his self-knowledge will have to be included in that body.³²⁶ But it cannot. For if it is the last truth (keeping in mind that two pieces of knowledge -- two perceptible objects -- cannot be acquired simultaneously), it would not be true because it is only true once all the other pieces of knowledge (including itself) are in place. And if it is not one of the truths, then the wise man is not wise because the body of his knowledge is incomplete.

The Stoics could obviously avoid this paradox, if the sage's self-knowledge were not a piece of knowledge like any other, i.e. first-order, and so not constitutive of that overall body. In other words, if the wise man's knowledge of his mental condition enjoyed a parenthetical or concomitant status in relation to the rest of the body of knowledge -- if it were a second-order piece of knowledge instead of a first -- then the paradox of the sage could be circumvented. For it would be possible to maintain that two things (presumably proper perceptible objects, i.e. first-order things) cannot become known at once.³²⁷ But if there were more than one epistemic level in play, then the wise man might be able to know two things at once, because one could, for instance, supervene on the other. However, the paradox holds because the Stoics want this last piece of knowledge -- self-knowledge -- to be a piece like any other.

Thus the paradox is revealing on two fronts: (i) The Stoics treat the disposition or state of the ἡγεμονικόν as an object like any other. Whether self-referential or not, the objects of the ἡγεμονικόν are all on a par. (ii) In addition to Sextus actually attacking the Stoics, he was actually correct to do so, at least with respect to self-intellection.

Having outlined the problem, I want now to conclude my examination of the Stoics with what, it could be argued, are two attempts at formulating a feasible account of the how intellect could be its own object of thought.

V

Hierocles' Ἠθικὴ στοιχείωσις, 3.56-4.53

Hierocles' version of the οἰκείωσις theory is of direct relevance because with it one has

³²⁶ cf. Plutarch, *De Communibus Notitiis contra Stoicos*, 1062B-C.

³²⁷ *SVF*, 3. 541 and M.M. Mackenzie, 'The Virtues of Socratic Ignorance', p. 148.

an attempt at outlining how the intellectual part of the soul could apprehend itself as a first-order object. However, before going directly to Hierocles' account, some background about the οἰκείωσις theory is in order. The οἰκείωσις theory had a bipartite development: one strand developed egoism, the other altruism.³²⁸ The former focused upon self-perception and self-preservation, while the latter social justice. For obvious reasons, I will concentrate solely on the former theme.

The earliest discussion we have of the οἰκείωσις theory comes from Chrysippus:

τὴν δὲ πρώτην ὁρμὴν φασὶ τὸ ζῶον ἴσχειν ἐπὶ τὸ τηρεῖν ἑαυτό, οἰκειούσης αὐτὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, καθά φησιν ὁ Χρύσιππος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Περὶ τελῶν, πρῶτον οἰκεῖον λέγων εἶναι παντὶ ζῷῳ τὴν αὐτοῦ σύστασιν καὶ τὴν ταύτης συνείδησιν· οὔτε γὰρ ἀλλοτριῶσαι εἰκὸς ἦν αὐτὸ τὸ ζῶον, οὔτε ποιήσασαν αὐτό μήτ' ἀλλοτριῶσαι μήτ' [οὐκ] οἰκειῶσαι.³²⁹

His objective in this context is to demonstrate that the primary impulse (πρώτη ὁρμή) of all animals is for self-preservation and not, as the Epicureans maintain, pleasure.³³⁰ Hence the first thing to be said about the οἰκείωσις theory is that its scope is not limited to the epistemology of rational creatures. Now given that the end of all animals, rational or otherwise, is self-preservation, it is obviously going to inform their actions, i.e. they will avoid things which are injurious to their well-being. Despite the fact that this passage of Chrysippus does make reference to self-perception (συνείδησιν),³³¹ that is not its primary focus. Self-perception might be a necessary condition for self-preservation, but it is the πρώτη ὁρμή, the desiderative aspect, in which Chrysippus is primarily interested.³³²

Cicero and Seneca offer us a somewhat similar picture. For Cicero, the sentient creature (animal) from birth has the immediate desire to preserve (conservandum) its own constitution (suum statum); something which again is only

³²⁸ cf. B. Inwood, Hierocles: Theory and Argument in the Second Century AD, p. 155 and G. Striker, Oikeiosis in Stoic Ethics, p. 146.

³²⁹ L&S 57A (Diogenes Laertius, Vitae, VII 85). Trans: 'They [the Stoics] say that an animal has self-preservation as the object of its first impulse, since nature from the beginning appropriates it, as Chrysippus says in his *On Ends* Book I. The first thing appropriate to every animal, he says, is its own constitution and the consciousness of this. For nature was not likely either to alienate the animal itself, or to make it and then neither alienate it nor appropriate it.'

³³⁰ Diogenes Laertius, ibid., VII 86.

³³¹ Inwood reads συναίσθησιν instead of the MSS. reading. Either way, the meaning is clear from the context. See. B. Inwood, Hierocles: Theory and Argument in the Second Century AD, p. 155.

³³² cf. B. Inwood, ibid., p. 155.

possible in virtue of an awareness of that constitution (*nisi sensum haberent sui*).³³³ Seneca³³⁴ also speaks of animals having a consciousness of their own constitutions (*constitutionis suae sensus est*). Like Chrysippus, he too is rejecting the hedonistic account of behaviour in favour of an account which is driven by the desire for self-preservation.³³⁵

Unlike his predecessors who do not emphasis the self, save as a necessary condition, Hierocles does concentrate on it. This is not to imply that Hierocles does not have his fair share of zoological stories or that he neglects the theme of self-preservation.³³⁶ Nonetheless, he does place much more emphasis upon how the intellect can be its own object and, as a result, how it can, from a Stoic materialistic point of view, affect itself.³³⁷

Up until 3.56 of his *Ἠθικὴ στοιχείωσις*, Hierocles concentrates upon the perception of the self in its relation to the external world or other members of that world. However, the subsequent discussion from 3.56 to 4.53 focuses exclusively on the creature's perception of itself.³³⁸ The external world or other members of that world do not enter the picture. In this section, Hierocles attempts to demonstrate that animals continually perceive themselves:

ἐπεὶ ἡ τοῖνυν ἐξ ἀμφότερων ἐστὶ τὸ ζῷον ... σύνθετον, ἐκ σώματος [καὶ] ψυχῆς, ἅμφω δ' ἐστὶ θιγτὰ καὶ πρόσβλήτα καὶ τὸ ἐρείσει δὴ ὑπόπτωτα, ἐτι δὲ δι' ὅλων κέκραται, καὶ θάκερον μὲν ἐστὶν αὐτῶν δυνάμεις αἰσθητική, τὸ δ' αὐτὸ ἡ τοῦτο καὶ τρόπον, ὃν ὑπεδείξαμεν, κινεῖται, δῆλον ὅτι διανοεῖται αἰσθάνοιτ' ἂν [τὸ ζῷον] ἑαυτοῦ.³³⁹

³³³ *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, 3.16. See B. Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 192-3.

³³⁴ *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, 121.1 (Hereafter *Epist.*) With Seneca, in this context, we should include Posidonius and Archimedes, because he begins the letter by telling us that they are on trial along with him as far as instinctive behaviour in animals goes.

³³⁵ To illustrate what he means, Seneca says the child, despite the pain it experiences when it first attempts to stand, learns to walk because this is what nature demands (*natura poscit*, Seneca, *Epist.*, 121.8.). By 'nature demands', I understand the creature's natural desire for self-preservation.

³³⁶ L&S 57C (Hierocles, *Ἠθικὴ στοιχείωσις*, 2.1-9) and 6.53-7.48.

³³⁷ As this theory is about all living creatures, in the case of non-rational animals the intellect obviously would not be affected but rather, as Inwood points out, some analogous part. See B. Inwood, *Ethics and Human action in Early Stoicism*, p. 196.

³³⁸ One might object to the relevance of this argument as far as self-intellection is concerned because it is not exclusively about rational animals but inclusive of all animals. In response, I think it is relevant to the extent that human beings are included, and so in their case it is a question about how the ἡγεμονικόν grasps itself.

³³⁹ L&S 53B. Trans: 'Since an animal is a composite of body and soul, and both of these are tangible and impressible and of course subject to resistance, and also so blended through and through, and one of them is a sensory faculty which itself undergoes movement in the way we have indicated, it is evident that the

This perception arises out the belief that the two parts, the soul and the body (the constituents of the σύνθετον), relate to one another causally; being somatic entities, they physically affect one another. According to Hierocles, they can impress themselves upon one another because they are mixed through and through (ἔτ[ι δὲ] δι' ὅλων κέκρται).³⁴⁰ Given this complete and perfect blending, if one then tosses in the premise that one of the two bodies involved, i.e. the soul, is a sensory faculty, then the conclusion that the other body is perceived immediately follows.

As it stands, Hierocles' demonstration of the animal's continual perception of itself, at least as far as the outward physical body is concerned, seems pretty straightforward. However, Hierocles thinks himself not only to have given an account of how the soul perceives the body in which it resides but also of how the soul -- in the case of humans, the intellectual part -- perceives the soul in its entirety.³⁴¹ For the conclusion of the passage immediately below explicitly remarks that, as a result of this interaction, the intellect (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) is aware both of all the parts of the body and all the parts of the soul:

τεινομένη γὰρ ἔλξω ἢ ψυχ[ὴ μετ'] ἀφέσεως [προσβάλ]λει πᾶσι τοῦ σώματος τοῖς ἰμέρεσιν, ἐ[πε]ιδὴ καὶ κέκρται πᾶσι, προσβάλλουσα δὲ ἀν[τι]προσ[βάλλ]εται. ἀντιβατικὸν γὰρ καὶ τὸ σῶμα, ἰ[κ]αθάπ[ερ] καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ· καὶ τὸ πάθος συνερειστικ[όν] ἰ ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀντερειστικὸν ἀποτελεῖται. κ[αὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀκροτά] ἰ των μερῶν εἴσω νε[ϋο]ν ἐπὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τ ἰ θους σ.. ἀναφέρ[εται], ὡς ἀντίληψιν γίνεσθαι (τῶν) ἰ μερῶν [ἀ]πά[ν]των τῶν [τε τ]οῦ σώματος καὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς.³⁴²

This conclusion -- the commanding part's perception of all the parts of the soul (<τῶν) ἰ μερῶν [ἀ]πά[ν]των ... τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς) includes itself -- is more problematic than the perception of the outward body for obvious reasons.³⁴³ Up until now it has been

animal perceives itself continuously.'

³⁴⁰ For an account of the Stoic discussion of mixture (κρᾶσις), cf. *L&S* 48A-C. By through and through, i.e. blending, the Stoics take the view that the properties of the bodies in question permeate the whole, they are coextensive with one another while remaining distinct. This is obviously stronger than touch in which just the surfaces of the bodies are in contact; what the Stoics refer to as juxtaposition, cf. *L&S* (vol. I), pp. 292-3. This idea of the soul permeating the body is certainly not unique to Hierocles. Calcidius, for example, speaks of the soul as pneuma filling the limbs of the body and ruling over it with different powers such as nutrition and sensation etc. See *L&S* 53G.

³⁴¹ cf. n. 338.

³⁴² *L&S* 53B. Trans: 'For by stretching out and relaxing, the soul makes an impression on all the body's parts, since it is blended with them all, and in making an impression it receives an impression in response. For the body, just like the soul, reacts to pressure; and the outcome is a state of their joint pressure upon, and resistance to, each other. From the outermost parts inclining within it travels ... to the commanding-faculty, with the result that there is an awareness both of all the body's parts and of the soul's.'

³⁴³ Pembroke also notes that this is a problem for Hierocles. See S. Pembroke, 'Oikeiosis', p. 119.

assumed that the intellectual part of the soul (as far as humans were concerned) is that which undergoes the affection and is not one of the objects which brings about the affection, at least not the affection which occurs in itself. The latter role was allotted to the outward body. Yet, the intellectual part of the soul must in some way also be that object which affects, if Hierocles is to maintain that it is perceptive of itself.

It would seem from the passage just cited that the way in which Hierocles tackles the problem of how the soul, in our case the intellect, apprehends itself is through this notion of complete and perfect κράσις between the soul and the body (δι' ὅλων κέκραται). For he certainly holds that the intellect apprehends itself and that apprehension occurs through this mixture, so it follows that the intellect somehow apprehends itself through this mixture. One possible but rather unsatisfactory construal might be that because the κράσις between the entire soul and the body is δι' ὅλων, the commanding faculty in acting on something with which it is inextricably bound is in a sense acting on itself. Inasmuch as the intellect affects the entire mixture, it affects itself.³⁴⁴ Such a claim, however, would either entail an identity relation between the intellect and that which affects the intellect or a confusion in scope.

Let me start with the identity relation: Presumably one way for the intellect to affect itself is if it were somehow to become identical with that which affects it. However, the Stoic notion of κράσις (as noted, n. 340) is such that the things involved, be it water and wine or body and soul, have a coextensive relation and not one of identity. For if they were identical, then it would no longer be a mixture or blend of two things but one thing which is simply self-identical. Hence within the confines of a κράσις theory, the identity relation is not plausible.

If, on the other hand, one takes the line that the intellect, by being a part of the mixture, affects the mixture and thereby affects itself because it is part of that mixture, then one is guilty of committing a confusion in scope. The intellect might affect the mixture but it is the mixture, and not the intellect, which affects the intellect. At best, the intellect might affect itself very indirectly. Thus, as noted by Pembroke, there is a problem in Hierocles attempting to argue that in virtue of the body and the soul being blended together through and through, the commanding faculty of soul perceives

³⁴⁴ cf. B. Inwood, Hierocles: Theory and Argument in the Second Century AD, p. 163-4.

itself.³⁴⁵ For the intellect does not have itself as the object. Hence the Hierocles' account of how the intellectual part of the soul apprehends itself falls short. For his materialism requires two distinct bodies, if there is to be apprehension.

VI
Περὶ τοῦ λόγου πῶς αὐτοῦ θεωρητικός ἐστίν
(How the Reasoning Faculty Contemplates Itself)
Epictetus' Discourses I.XX.1-6

Epictetus also attempts to give an account of how the intellectual part of the soul apprehends itself. He opens this short chapter of the Discourses by discussing the various objects of the arts (τέχναι) and faculties (δυνάμεις). His initial point is that when the object of either of these is of a like kind (ὁμοειδής), the contemplator inevitably becomes self-contemplative (ἀναγκαίως καὶ αὐτῆς γίνεται θεωρητική).³⁴⁶ On the other hand, if the object is different, then it is impossible to become self-contemplative.³⁴⁷ To illustrate what he means by the latter, Epictetus gives the example of leather working. The art of leather working has as its object hides, not the art of leather working itself.³⁴⁸ However, the relation between the intellectual part of the soul and its object, being ὁμοειδής, does entail self-contemplation:

ὁ οὖν λόγος πρὸς τί ποτε ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως παρείληπται; πρὸς χρήσιν φαντασιῶν οἷαν δεῖ. αὐτὸς οὖν τί ἐστίν; σύστημα ἐκ ποιῶν φαντασιῶν· οὕτω γίνεται φύσει καὶ αὐτοῦ θεωρητικός.³⁴⁹

Self-contemplation is secured (αὐτοῦ θεωρητικός), because the intellect, by contemplating its object(s), becomes them and, as a result, contemplates itself.³⁵⁰ What appears to be driving Epictetus' account, as was the case with Hierocles, is the need for an identity relation between the subject and object, in addition to the causal one. Yet, unlike the Hieroclean account which bases its argument on a κρᾶσις theory, Epictetus'

³⁴⁵ cf. n. 343.

³⁴⁶ Epictetus, The Discourses, I.XX.2. Text of Epictetus is taken from the Teubner edition. Epictetus, Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriano Digestae, ed. H. Schenkl (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1844).

³⁴⁷ Epictetus, ibid., I.XX.3.

³⁴⁸ Epictetus, ibid., I.XX.3.

³⁴⁹ Epictetus, ibid., I.XX.5-6. Trans: 'Well then, for what purpose have we received reason from nature? For the proper use of external impressions. What, then, is reason itself? Something composed out of a certain kind of external impressions. And so it comes naturally to be also self-contemplative.' This translation is not based upon L&S.

³⁵⁰ Epictetus, ibid., I.XX.6.

position is closer to the Aristotelian one. For identity is achieved when the ἡγεμονικόν is acted upon by the φαντασία. Given this affection, the reasoning faculty becomes a σύστημα ἐκ ποιῶν φαντασιῶν.

However, what does it mean to be a σύστημα (composition or ordered structure)?³⁵¹ At this point, it might be helpful to make use of a passage from Stobaeus in which he speaks of how the Stoics understood the relation between the ἡγεμονικόν and the σύστημα which, at least in part, is constitutive of it. According to his account of the Stoics, they took it, the σύστημα, to be an organised or structured group of ἐπιστήμαι:

εἶναι δὲ τὴν ἐπιστήμην κατάληψιν ἀσφαλῇ καὶ ἀμετάπτωτον ὑπὸ λόγου· ἑτέραν δὲ ἐπιστήμην σύστημα ἐξ ἐπιστημῶν τοιούτων, οἷον ἡ τῶν κατὰ μέρος λογικῇ ἐν τῷ σπουδαίῳ ὑπάρχουσα.³⁵²

But what are these ἐπιστήμαι? From the passage just quoted, it would appear to be a plurality of cognitive impressions of particulars which, with the help of reason, have become a secured and impregnable part of the ἡγεμονικόν, or to be more precise, the ἡγεμονικόν disposed in a specific manner.³⁵³ A.A. Long describes them as a collection (ᾄθροισμα) or system (σύστημα) of truths.³⁵⁴ And what makes them a system is the way in which reason binds them together, i.e. as an unmoveable whole. The body of truths, i.e. scientific knowledge, is just what the ἡγεμονικόν of the wise man is.

Given Stobaeus' account of the relation between the ἡγεμονικόν and the σύστημα, does it shed light on Epictetus' version of things? I think the answer has to be yes. For the passage quoted from the Discourses does speak of the reasoning faculty (ὁ λόγος [i.e. λογικὴ δύναμις]) as that which is composed out of a certain kind of external impressions (i.e. kataleptic ones). This composition, in turn, goes to making up the body of truths which reside within the ἡγεμονικόν, thereby determining its disposition. Now,

³⁵¹ This term σύστημα occurs in a passage from Zeno when he remarks that τέχνη ἐστὶ σύστημα ἐκ καταλήψεων συγγεγυμνασμένων, SVF. I.21. For more general use of the term σύστημα in which it means any ordered structure such as a group of premises or virtuous actions, cf. Diogenes Laertius, Vitae. VII 45 and SVF. III.293 respectively. Also cf. A.A. Long, 'Language and Thought in Stoicism', p. 112.

³⁵² L&S 41H (SVF. III. 112). Trans: '[The Stoics say] Scientific knowledge is a cognition which is secure and unchangeable by reason. It is secondly a system of such *epistemai*, like the rational cognition of particulars which exists in the virtuous man.'

³⁵³ cf. L&S (vol. I), p. 257.

³⁵⁴ A.A. Long, 'Language and Thought in Stoicism', p. 100. For a discussion of the difference between true (ἀληθές) and truth (ἀλήθεια), see L&S 33P (Sextus Empiricus, Outlines of Pyrrhonism, 2.81-3). In short truth is corporeal. It is scientific knowledge which in turn is the ἡγεμονικόν disposed in a certain way.

I would argue, it is by determining the disposition of the ἡγεμονικόν, that the ἡγεμονικόν becomes a σύστημα φαντασιῶν. For the latter determine its disposition inasmuch as they are that from which it, the ἡγεμονικόν, is composed. They are what the ἡγεμονικόν becomes. Given this identity, the ἡγεμονικόν is supposed to be self-contemplative.

But is this determining of disposition sufficient to account for self-intellection? In other words, how does Epictetus get from the intellect being a σύστημα φαντασιῶν to the intellect contemplating itself? Presumably his answer goes something like this: As the ἡγεμονικόν contemplates the body of truths out which it is constituted, it contemplates itself, because it is identical with that body of knowledge. But there is a problem. Assuming the ἡγεμονικόν is properly disposed, i.e. has been affected in such a way as to become that body of truths, this is its state *qua* intellectual subject. For this is how it has been affected and, as a result, this is the disposition it has acquired. It is what it has become. Yet how could such a qualified body in turn become its own object, while still remaining the subject which is supposed to be doing the contemplating? If the body were, say, to split up into two parts, the part which played the role of subject would not be self-contemplative because it had not as of yet become the other part, the body of truths. But once it did, we would be back to an object devoid of a subject. In other words, this pneumatic body can only take on one epistemic role at a time, either it is the subject disposed in a certain way or the object, but not both. We are left with one of two alternatives: Either abandon the identity relation between the subject and object and with it the notion of self-contemplation, or keep the identity relation at the price of triviality. The disposed pneumatic body in question is simply identical with itself. It simply is what it is. Epictetus, more so than Hierocles, gets the full force of Sextus' paradox because the corporeal entity with which Epictetus is concerned can only fill out part of the equation required for a coherent account of self-intellection.

VII Sextus Revisited

In the end, both the accounts of Hierocles and Epictetus fall short as far as theories of self-intellection. For as Sextus rightly brought out, their materialism is such that it does

not allow for all the required relations. It can accommodate coextensivity and causality but when it comes to identity, it self-destructs. For the latter undermined Hierocles' κρᾶσις theory, at least with respect to the intellect grasping itself. And with Epictetus, we were left with a trivial identity relation, the self-identity of the ἡγεμονικόν. For any other manoeuvre left him vulnerable either to Sextus' part/part attack or his whole/whole attack.

Sextus' paradox forms the perfect counterpart to the strong monism of Parmenides, as far as the epistemological relation between the epistemic subject and its object is concerned. For both positions have a lethal effect on the relation between the epistemic subject and its object: They are prohibitive of it, rendering the epistemological terminology of subject and object entirely inappropriate. Having seen the development of the dilemma about whether the subject can or cannot have itself as an object of thought, let us now see whether it can be solved.

VI

Plotinus' Response to Sextus' Paradox

With Sextus' paradox, an impasse in setting out a theory of self-intellection has been reached. Either the subject becomes the object (the part/part account) or there is no object at all but just the subject (the whole/whole account), thereby making any account of self-intellection impossible; at least an account in which the subject has itself as its own object. However, Plotinus has a response to Sextus' paradox.³⁵⁵ With his account of the intellect -- the second hypostasis -- I shall argue that we have the setting out of the structure of self-intellection in such a way that the epistemic subject and its object do not eclipse one another. Rather, they have a coextensive relation *qua* wholes, and yet are still able to meet the identity condition in such a way as to guarantee self-intellection. As a result, with Plotinus we have for the first time an adequate account of self-intellection.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ This claim is by no means novel. For comments on the influence of the sceptical arguments on Plotinus, cf. J. Pépin, 'Eléments pour une histoire de la relation entre l'intelligence et l'intelligible chez Platon et dans le néoplatonisme', Revue Philosophique 146 (1956), pp. 54-5, Richard T. Wallis, 'Scepticism and Neoplatonism', Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II. 32.2 (1987), pp. 922-25, E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie Band 77 (1995), p. 32-3, 36 and Lloyd P. Gerson, Plotinus (London: Routledge Publishers, 1994), p. 248, n. 46.

³⁵⁶ In part, the aim of this chapter will be to challenge two of the most recent views about the manner in which the Plotinian intellect thinks itself. E.K. Emilsson takes the line that the subject-object distinction is incompatible with self-knowledge, and I quote: 'Thus, we have a claim to the effect that even a subject-object distinction in the intellect is incompatible with its self-knowledge. The subject, what we have called the thinker-side, must immediately know itself.' E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 32. This is a much stronger claim than, say, that of O'Daly, who takes the line that self-knowledge presupposes a unity of subject and object. See Gerard J.P. O'Daly, Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1973), p. 70. Also see Edward W. Warren 'Consciousness in Plotinus', Phronesis 9 (1964), p. 83 n. 1. The motivation for Emilsson's strong claim is the Sextus material, which holds that the subject is the whole and thus there is no room for an object, thereby ruling out self-knowledge. I shall attempt to argue that although Plotinus does take the 'whole' route -- and thus is responding to Sextus -- this does not necessarily rule out the subject-object distinction. Rather, self-intellection, if it is to be successful, requires it. It just will not be along the lines of the part/part reading. The second view about self-intellection which I shall try to dispense with is Gerson's. He claims that the intellect's self-knowledge comes about because there is no difference between the intellect knowing and the intellect knowing that it is knowing: sKp and sKsKp are mutually implicative. Although disproving this second interpretation is not nearly as important to my enterprise as disproving Emilsson's, I shall attempt to show below why it too does not do justice to the Plotinian account of self-intellection. For, I think, it derives self-knowledge in the wrong manner. See L. Gerson, Plotinus, pp. 54-5.

I

The Discursive Intellect's Relation to Objects

To understand the Plotinian account of the intellect, it must be viewed in the larger Plotinian psychological/epistemological context. For Plotinus held there to be two, not one, intellectual activities, the discursive or the dianoetic (διανοία)³⁵⁷ and the noetic.³⁵⁸ However, let me begin by stressing a central point which is common to both of these intellectual activities. According to Plotinus, any sort of intellectual act, discursive or otherwise, is a process in which the thinking subject comes to think some kind of object:

δεῖ τοίνυν γινώσκειν ἐπιστήσαντα, ὥς νόησις πᾶσα ἔκ τινός ἐστι
καὶ τινός.³⁵⁹

All thinking (νόησις) must have some sort of object or content about which to think (τινός). If not, the act itself will be rendered vacuous.³⁶⁰ Thus, understanding the differences between these intellectual acts will lie in the type of objects each faculty has and in the type of relations the subject has with that object. (A proper grasp, therefore, of the difference between these two intellectual activities is required, if we are to understand fully how it is that the intellectual activity with which I am concerned, νοῦς,

³⁵⁷ cf. 5.3 [49].3.35. For a discussion of the terms Plotinus employs when discussing discursive reason such as τὸ διανοητικόν, λογιστικόν or λογισμός, cf. John Rist 'Integration and Undescended Soul in Plotinus', American Journal of Philology 88 (1967), p.416 and L. Gerson, Plotinus, p. 250, n. 63.

³⁵⁸ For that matter, in the Plotinian world one could make a case for considering sense perception to be an intellectual process, given that at 6.7 [38].7.30ff. Plotinus remarks: ὥστε εἶναι τὰς αἰσθήσεις ταύτας ἄμυδράς νοήσεις, τὰς δὲ ἐκεῖ νοήσεις ἐναργεῖς αἰσθήσεις. ('So that these sense perceptions here are dim intellections, but the intellections there are clear sense-perceptions.') However, this sort of interpretation will depend in part on how one takes III.8 [30], a treatise in which Plotinus goes so far as to argue that nature itself is capable of contemplation. Whichever route one opts for, one has to be careful how he interprets τὰς δὲ ἐκεῖ νοήσεις ἐναργεῖς αἰσθήσεις, for Plotinus is explicit that the intellect does not see the sorts of things which we are accustomed to think of when it comes to seeing, i.e. the seeing of colours or forms which one has in physical bodies: ποῖον δὲ τι ὁρᾷ τὸ νοητὸν ὁ νοῦς, καὶ ποῖόν τι ἑαυτόν; ἢ τὸ μὲν νοητὸν οὐδὲ δεῖ ζητεῖν, οἷον τὸ ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασι χρῶμα ἢ σχῆμα· πρὶν γὰρ ταῦτα εἶναι, ἔστιν ἐκεῖνα· καὶ ὁ λόγος δὲ ὁ ἐν τοῖς σπέρμασι τοῖς ταῦτα ποιοῦσιν οὐ ταῦτα· ('But as what sort of thing does Intellect see the intelligible, and, as what sort of thing does it see itself? As for the intelligible, one should not look for something like colour or form in bodies; for the intelligibles exist before the existence of these; and the rational forming principle in the seeds which produce these are not form and colour.' 5.3 [49].8.1-5.) Text and translations, unless otherwise stated, are based upon A.H. Armstrong's Loeb edition. The Enneads, 7 vols., trans. A.H. Armstrong (London: Loeb Classical Library, William Heinemann Ltd, 1966-88). Cf. Emilsson's response to Dillon for some insightful remarks on the topic of intellectual perceptions. E.K. Emilsson, 'Commentary on Dillon', The Boston Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy, (New York: The American Press, 1987), pp. 359-63.

³⁵⁹ 6.7 [38].40.5-6. Trans: 'It is necessary to know and understand that all thinking comes from something and is of something'. The fact that Plotinus thinks that *all* thinking is *of something*, which presumably includes self-intellection, does not help Emilsson's thesis as discussed in n. 356.

³⁶⁰ Such vacuity, as was witnessed in the first chapter, was the sort of consequence one had with the strong monism of Parmenides.

operates.)

According to Plotinus, the part of the soul that reasons discursively combines (συνάγον), divides (διαίρου) and compares incoming impressions (τύποι or εἶδωλα) which it receives from both the sensory and noetic worlds with ones which it had previously received.³⁶¹ So, for example, one recognises an individual, say Socrates, by comparing an incoming impression of that individual with an earlier impression of him.³⁶² In the case of normative judgements, such as Socrates is good, one can pass this type of judgement in virtue of what Plotinus calls the rules (κανόνες) embedded in the rational part of the soul. However, these rules too, like the images, do not have their point of origin in the rational part of the soul. Rather the discursive subject acquires them through the intellect's illumination.³⁶³ The soul 'is written upon by the intellect'.³⁶⁴ So the κανόνες can also be grouped with the τύποι inasmuch as they form part of the overall body of content which is *given* to the rational part of the soul, differing only in function: the soul employs them as a means of passing judgement on other things.

What conclusions can be drawn from the discursive activity as outlined? The fact that the dianoetic faculty or subject is receptive of τύποι or εἶδωλα is crucial. For it implies that this faculty focuses upon objects which enjoy a separate, independent and external existence. The discursive subject's relation to its objects is mediated by the images which resonate from these objects. The discursive subject does not have direct contact with the objects themselves. Even the κανόνες which reside in this faculty are only images, images of that which, strictly speaking, exists in the noetic world.³⁶⁵ Now as the faculty requires external data in order to perform its discursive function, it can be inferred that the faculty itself is not generative of its own content but rather is structured in such a way as to look outwards, away from itself:

τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ διανοητικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἄρα ἐπιστρέφει ἐφ' ἑαυτὸ
καὶ αὐτό; ἢ οὐ· ἀλλὰ ὧν δέχεται τύπων ἐφ' ἑκάτερα τὴν σύνεσιν
ἴσχει.³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ 5.3 [49].2.7-14 and 5.3 [49].3.35-40.

³⁶² 5.3 [49].3.3-7.

³⁶³ 5.3 [49].3.10-12 and 4.15-19.

³⁶⁴ 5.3 [49].4.22. No doubt Plotinus has Aristotle's De Anima 3.4 in mind here.

³⁶⁵ 5.3 [49].4.21-23.

³⁶⁶ 5.3 [49].2.23-26. Trans: 'Does then this reasoning part of the soul return upon itself? No it does not.

In virtue of this relation, the discursive subject directs its gaze exclusively towards external objects.

Two very important consequences follow from discursive reason being disposed in this way: Firstly, it is fallible because its relation is mediated by impressions. Here Plotinus is responding to the Sceptic attack on impressions and their unreliability. However, he limits fallibility to the discursive level.³⁶⁷ His answer to the Sceptic about the fallibility of impressions thus determines his account of the structure of the noetic intellect, which will in turn have an effect on how Plotinus responds to Sextus' paradox. For the infallibility of the noetic intellect rests upon the claim that it does not deal with impressions. And this, as we shall see, is because of Plotinus' doctrine of internality.

The second conclusion to be drawn from the disposition of the discursive intellect is that the type of relation in which the subject has itself as an object of intellection does not arise at the discursive level. For the relation between the subject and object at this level does not involve an identity relation. It is only at the noetic level that the identity relation becomes an issue, and along with it self-intellection:

ἀλλὰ διὰ τί οὐ τούτῳ τῷ [sc. διανοητικῷ] μέρει δόντες τὸ νοεῖν
ἑαυτὸ ἀπαλλαξόμεθα; ἢ ὅτι ἔδομεν αὐτῷ τὰ ἔξω σκοπεῖσθαι καὶ
πολυπραγμονεῖν, νῶν δὲ ἀξιοῦμεν ὑπάρχειν τὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ
σκοπεῖσθαι.³⁶⁸

So with a view to developing this notion of self-intellection, let me now turn to the noetic intellect.³⁶⁹

Rather it has understanding of the impressions which it receives from both sides.' Also cf. E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 32.

³⁶⁷ To quote Emilsson, 'So, rather than attempting to show where the sceptic goes wrong, Plotinus sees it as his task to find adequate assumptions that provide a foundation of knowledge that is immune to sceptical attacks.' E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 36.

³⁶⁸ 5.3 [49].3.16-19. Trans: 'But why do we not give self-thinking to this part, and finish with the subject? Because we gave this part the task of observing what is outside it and busying itself with it, but we think that it is proper to Intellect to observe what belongs to itself and what is within itself.' Also cf. 5.3 [49].7.25-26. In this passage, the part of the soul directed inwards does not affect my argument because, for all intents and purposes, it is the intellect. This has its origins in the Plotinian doctrine that the entire soul does not descend from intellect; a doctrine which subsequent Neoplatonists go on to reject, cf. Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, §§ 211.

³⁶⁹ However, it would be wrong to infer from this account that the dianoetic faculty is unreflexive *simpliciter*. It does have some sort of self-knowledge. For instance, it knows that it is discursive reason and that it has a grasp of the world around it which acts upon it. As Plotinus puts it, it thinks itself as *belonging to another* (cf. 5.3 [49].6.3-6, quoted below), and thus is not directly self-reflexive. Cf. E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 32.

II The Noetic Intellect's Relation to Itself

The noetic activity, if it is to qualify as an intellectual activity, must also think about something. It must have some intellectual content. Now, in order to appreciate Plotinus' account of the intellect and its relation to what it thinks, the formal structure of the intellect's activity must first be set out. There are two phases or logical moments.³⁷⁰ The first is that of an inchoate and undefined intellect which has not yet turned towards its source, the One. Plotinus compares this stage to that of unformed sight.

οὗτος δὲ πολὺς ἐξ ἑνὸς ἐγένετο, καὶ οὕτως γνοὺς εἶδεν αὐτό, καὶ τότε ἐγένετο ἰδοῦσα ὄψις. τοῦτο δὲ ἤδη νοῦς, ὅτε ἔχει, καὶ ὡς νοῦς ἔχει· πρὸ δὲ τούτου ἔφεσις μόνον καὶ ἀτύπωτος ὄψις.³⁷¹

The second phase is both the act of conversion (ἐπιστρέφειν) itself and what results from such an act. It is in this second phase that the intellect's true form is realised:

τὸ δὲ γινόμενον εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη καὶ ἐπληρώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον καὶ νοῦς οὗτος. καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο στάσις αὐτοῦ τὸ ὄν ἐποίησιν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα τὸν νοῦν. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔστι πρὸς αὐτό, ἵνα ἴδῃ, ὁμοῦ νοῦς γίγνεται καὶ ὄν.³⁷²

and, as a result, self-intellection occurs:

-- ὥστε εἴπερ ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἐστι καὶ σὺν ἑαυτῷ καὶ τοῦτο, ὅπερ ἐστί, νοῦς ἐστίν (ἀνόητος δὲ νοῦς οὐκ ἂν ποτε εἴη) ἀνάγκη συνεῖναι αὐτῷ τὴν γνῶσιν ἑαυτοῦ --³⁷³

For thinking itself is, at least in part, the function (τὸ ἔργον) of the intellect.³⁷⁴ Thus a

³⁷⁰ cf. 5.9 [5].8.20-22. Here Plotinus explicitly remarks that it is our thinking which places these stages in temporal succession, when strictly speaking they should not be. Rather, they are the structure of the intellectual activity, an activity which is eternal. Also cf. Lloyd P. Gerson, *Plotinus*, p. 45.

³⁷¹ 5.3 [49].11.10-13. Trans: 'But this impression became many out of one, and so intellect knew it and saw it, and then it became a seeing sight. It is already intellect when it possesses this, and it possesses it as intellect; but before this it is only desire and unformed sight.' For a discussion of the inchoate intellect, see J. Bussanich, *The One and its Relation to the Intellect in Plotinus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), pp. 11-14.

³⁷² 5.2 [11].1.10-14. Trans: 'This, when it has come into being, turns back upon the One and is filled, and becomes intellect by looking towards it. Its halt and turning towards the One constitutes being, its gaze upon the One, intellect. Since it halts and turns towards the One that it may see, it becomes at once intellect and being. Also cf. 5.1 [10].5.18-19, 5.3 [49].11.26-31. and 5.6 [24].1.5-6. However, it should be noted that the last of these passages has proved most troublesome for modern commentators. The difficulty centres around whether the proper subject of ἑώρα is the One or νοῦς. I follow Armstrong, O'Daly and Schroeder who take it to be νοῦς instead of the One because the One is beyond any sort of activity, including self-intellection or awareness. See Armstrong, *Plotinus: Enneads*, vol. 5 (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1984), pp.34-5, n. 1, G.J.P. O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self*, p. 72 and F.M. Schroeder, 'Conversion and Consciousness in Plotinus, 'Enneads' 5.1 [10], 7 *Hermes* 114 (1986), p. 187.

³⁷³ 5.3 [49].6.32-34. Trans: '-- so that if it [sc. intellect] is in itself and with itself, and that which it is, is intellect (there could not even be an unintelligent intellect), its knowledge of itself must necessarily accompany it --' Also cf. 5.3 [49].6.39-42.

³⁷⁴ 5.3 [49].6.35.

crucial, if not the most crucial, difference between two faculties can be now discerned. One is entirely oriented towards itself, while the other is not, with the result that the noetic subject always has itself as its object of intellection:

ἡ μὲν γὰρ ψυχὴ ἐνόει ἑαυτὴν ὅτι ἄλλου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς ὅτι αὐτὸς καὶ οἶος αὐτὸς καὶ ὅστις καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ φύσεως καὶ ἐπιστρέφων εἰς αὐτόν.³⁷⁵

The noetic intellect cannot intelligise without intelligising itself. The content of its thought is itself. They are in *some sense* identical with one another.³⁷⁶ Thus, on the face of it, self-intellection is secured because the subject is the same as its object, since that object is itself.

However, this is an over-simplification. At the outset of this section, it was said the realisation of intellect came about through its directing its attention towards the One. The One is that in virtue of which the intellect is what it is. Thus, on the face of it, it would seem somewhat misguided to say that the intellect is exclusively self-directed, i.e. only has itself as an object of intellection. For such a claim would seem to be incompatible with the claim that the intellect gazes upon the One, i.e. has it as an object, assuming, of course, that we do not equate the One with the intellect. Certainly Plotinus does not.³⁷⁷ So there would seem to be a case for saying that the activity of the intellect is not exclusively self-directed. Plotinus' response to such a claim would, I think, be the following: The intellect never strictly apprehends the One.³⁷⁸ Even in its inchoate state, the intellect only has some kind of image or impression (φάντασμά τι) of the One.³⁷⁹ Keeping to the sight imagery, Plotinus does not say that the intellect, when fully articulated, sees an independent external object different from itself, something which one might expect if it saw the One. But rather, he says, it sees the seeing itself, i.e. its own activity: ἔστι γὰρ ἡ νόησις ὁρασις ὁρῶσα ἑμῶν τε ἑν.³⁸⁰ The purpose of the One

³⁷⁵ 5.3 [49].6.3-6. Trans: 'For the soul thought itself as belonging to another, but intellect did so as itself, and as what and who it is and [it started its thinking] from its own nature and thought reverting back upon itself.'

³⁷⁶ cf. 3.8 [30].3.19.

³⁷⁷ cf. 6.7 [38].41.12-22.

³⁷⁸ cf. 5.3 [49].11.10-12 (quoted above) and J. Bussanich, The One and its Relation to the Intellect in Plotinus, p. 14.

³⁷⁹ 5.3 [49].11.7.

³⁸⁰ 5.1 [10].5.19-20. It should be noted that there is some question about the 'τε' in the manuscripts. I follow Armstrong and Henry and Schwyzer in retaining the 'τε'. See A. Armstrong, Enneads, vol. 5, p. 28 n. 1 and Henry and Schwyzer, Plotini Opera, vol. II (Brussels: L'Édition Universelle, S.A., 1959), p. 272. As for the 'seeing the seeing', I shall return to this notion at the end of my study, since it is of pivotal

in this context is to cause the intellect to turn towards itself; to take itself as an object, thereby attaining its proper intellectual self-directed relation. The intellect's apprehension of the One is really the intellect's apprehension of itself.³⁸¹ It sees the One *qua* intellect:

ἢ ὅτι οὐχ ἔν θεωρεῖ. ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν τὸ ἐν θεωρῇ οὐχ ὡς ἓν· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐ γίνεται νοῦς.³⁸²

The intellect's relation to itself, therefore, is not in any way hindered or made opaque by the One in this context but instead is realised with the help of the One. The intellect still has itself as an object of intellection:

τὸ εἶναι [sc. τοῦ νοεῖν] οὖν ἐνέργεια, καὶ οὐδέν, πρὸς ὃ ἡ ἐνέργεια· πρὸς αὐτῷ ἄρα. ἑαυτὸν ἄρα νοῶν οὕτω πρὸς αὐτῷ καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἴσχει.³⁸³

The sketch thus far of Plotinus' position is such that the epistemic subject is clearly identical with its object, given that that object is itself. However, having said all this, it is still very unclear as to how and whether such an account will suffice as either an

importance.

³⁸¹ This sort of account presupposes a crucial Plotinian principle: in order for anything, be it the soul or the intellect, to know itself properly, it can do so only by turning towards its source. It might be said that the intellect sees the One inasmuch as it sees the effect of the One on itself, its intellectual or epistemic unity.

³⁸² 3.8[30].8.30-2. Trans: 'Because what it contemplates is not the One. For when it contemplates the One, it does not do as one: If it did, it would not become intellect.'

³⁸³ 5.3 [49].7.18-21. Trans: 'The being of intellect, therefore, is activity, and there is nothing towards which that activity is directed; so it is self-directed. Thinking itself, it is thus with itself and holds its activity directed to itself.' As we shall see in the next section, there is another very good reason why the intellect cannot have the One as a proper object of thought. Namely, all the objects of the intellect are internal to it. Consequently, the One would have to be within the intellect itself, a point which Plotinus is aware of and rules out: μόνον γὰρ ἐν ἐκείνῳ· καὶ εἰ μὲν πάντα, ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἂν ἦν. διὰ τοῦτο ἐκείνο οὐδὲν μὲν τῶν ἐν τῷ νῷ, ... (Trans: 'That One is one alone: if he was all things, he would be numbered among beings. For this reason that One is none of the things in intellect, ...' 5.1 [10].7.21-23). Having said this, I must make some mention of 5.6 [24].5.16-17, a passage in which Plotinus speaks of the intellect thinking the One first and foremost and itself only incidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός). Does this undermine all that has been said and entail that the intellect is not directly reflexive? I would say no it does not. Two points must be made to defend this claim: First, it could be argued that in this middle *Ennead*, [24], Plotinus was still under the sway of Alexander of Aphrodisias much more than by the time he came to write 5.3 [49], his last *Ennead*. For as O'Daly has pointed out (*Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self*, pp. 79-80) Plotinus gets this notion of κατὰ συμβεβηκός from Alexander's Commentary of Aristotle's *De Anima* (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Anima*, 86, 17ff. Bruns). For there Alexander, developing Aristotle's doctrine of the intellect, also speaks of the thinker knowing itself incidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός). Secondly, there is the issue of topic. 5.6 is specifically about how and why the intellect must focus on the first principle. Whereas, 5.3 is specifically about self-intellection. So if one had to choose, 5.3 would be the safer of the two as far as self-intellection is concerned. As Emilsson says, with 5.3 we have Plotinus' most thorough and authoritative account of self-intellection. Thus, the worst case scenario for me is that Plotinus did not hold the intellect to be directly self-reflexive early on in his philosophical career (although even in the early *Enneads* there is evidence to the contrary). Whereas on the best case scenario, given the difference in topic between the two *Enneads*, one should be cautious with 5.6 when it comes to how the intellect's self-relation should be understood.

adequate account of self-intellection or a response to Sextus' paradox. For the claim that the intellectual subject is identical with its object and thus thinks itself is, on its own, sufficient for neither.³⁸⁴ The crux of the matter will come down to how Plotinus deals with the relation between the intellectual subject and its object(s) and whether the intellect can have itself as an object, while still retaining the subject-object distinction.

III The Noetic Intellect's Relation to its Objects

In order to begin to understand how Plotinus' account might form an adequate basis for a theory of self-intellection, and, by extension a response to Sextus, I obviously must do more than just outline a formal sketch in which the Plotinian intellect is shown to be self-directed. I must properly address what that content is and how it is that the intellect relates to it. To begin, that we are not dealing with an entity which is absolutely simple and self-identical is clear from the fact that Plotinus speaks of the intellect as a one-many (έν πολλά), as opposed to the One which is just one, i.e. is absolutely simple.³⁸⁵ The intellect, if its self-relation is not to be jeopardised, must see itself transparently in the 'many'. Otherwise, Plotinus' account of the intellect will fall short of the claim that the intellect is directly self-reflexive, i.e. has itself as a transparent object of knowledge.

The way Plotinus deals with the intellect having many objects and yet remaining self-directed is to locate the objects within the intellect. They, the objects, are somehow part of the intellect: ... νῶ δὲ ἀξιοῦμεν ὑπάρχειν τὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ σκοπεῖσθαι.³⁸⁶ The intellect's thinking is focused within and not outside: καὶ ὡς νοῶν

³⁸⁴ We have been here once before with Aristotle, and there can be little doubt that Plotinus' account of the intellect does take much from Aristotle's. On this point cf. R. Wallis, 'Scepticism and Neoplatonism', pp. 923-4 and L. Gerson, *Plotinus*, p. 243 n. 7.

³⁸⁵ In this regard, Plotinus sees himself as adhering to the second hypothesis of Plato's dialogue, the *Parmenides* (144e5; 145a2). Cf. 4.8 [6].3.11, 5.1 [10].8.27, 5.3 [49].15.11ff., 6.2 [43].2.2, 6.2 [43].10.12, 6.2 [43].15.14-15, 6.2 [43].21.7, 6.2 [43].22.10, 6.5 [23].6.1-2, 6.6 [34].8.23, 6.6 [34].13.52-4, 6.7 [38].14.11-12 and 6.7 [38].39.11-14. Also cf. M. Atkinson, *Ennead V.I: On the Three Principal Hypostases: A Commentary with Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 196-8 and L. Gerson, *Plotinus*, pp. 44-5.

³⁸⁶ 5.3 [49].3.18-19. Trans: '... but we think that it is proper to intellect for it observe what belongs to itself and what is within itself.' (quoted in full above, n. 368). This epistemological reason, i.e. the intellect being self-directed, is by no means meant to be the only reason why Plotinus would want to locate the objects of the intellect within it. There are several other reasons (epistemological, metaphysical and even cosmological) which are just as, if not more, central to his philosophy which would motivate him to place the intellect's objects within it. For a start, we have already seen that it, in part, is a refutation of

ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ οὐκ ἔξω.³⁸⁷ Thus by being part of the intellect, the intellect in a sense is thinking them in thinking itself. But just how it thinks itself needs to be clearly set out. As it stands, it is not obvious how the intellect can have itself as a transparent object and yet relate to the many which are supposed to be part of itself.

For a start, let me be clear what is intended by objects in this noetic context. According to Plotinus, the objects of the intellect are the forms or ideas:

εἰ οὖν ἡ νόησις ἐνόντος, ἐκεῖνο τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἐνόν· καὶ ἡ ἰδέα αὕτη. τί οὖν τοῦτο; νοῦς καὶ ἡ νοερὰ οὐσία, οὐχ ἑτέρα τοῦ νοῦ ἐκάστη ἰδέα, ἀλλ' ἐκάστη νοῦς. καὶ ὅλος³⁸⁸ μὲν ὁ νοῦς τὰ πάντα εἶδη, ...³⁸⁹

What sort of relation do these objects enjoy with the noetic or intellectual subject? For instance, which side (i.e. the intellectual subject or the intelligible object), if any, takes priority? Is there a causal relation between the two sides, or is it simply logical, i.e. simply coextensive?

There is evidence, I think, to show that they, the intellectual subject and its object(s), enjoy a reciprocal causal relation. The two sides entail one another in the following manner: The intellect, unlike its dianoetic counterpart, by its very act of thinking establishes the existence of its objects:

ἡ δὲ ἄληθινος ὅτι νοῦς ὢν ὄντως νοεῖ τὰ ὄντα καὶ ὑφίστησιν.³⁹⁰

the Sceptic on the issue of the fallibility of impressions. There is also the following metaphysical motivation: As the intellect is the most unified principle after the One, it should, after the One, be the most unified. One way to accomplish this is to make its objects internal to it, thereby making it more unified than, say, the soul whose objects are external to it. Cf. 5.4 [7].2.1-3. Placing the objects within the intellect is also conducive to his cosmological account. For it is not the case in the Plotinian cosmos that the intellect transcends the soul in the sense that it is outside of it. Rather, Plotinus speaks of νοῦς being a circle around the One which in turn is contained by a larger circle, the soul (cf. 4.2 [1].1.25ff. and 5.1 [10].7.45). Thus, the noetic faculty is to be regarded as being inside (ἐνταῦθα) or within the soul and discursive reason, affecting, i.e. illuminating, the latter by flowing outwards. (Dillon draws our attention to this point, remarking that 'the intellect presides over soul and the world transcendentally within'. J. Dillon, 'The Mind of Plotinus', The Boston Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy (New York: The American Press, 1987), p. 351.) Such a picture helps to explain why when Plotinus, discussing the two intellectual processes, refers to the dianoetic process as a superstructure (ἐπικείμενον) over or around the noetic (6.7 [38].40.5-19). However, as I am looking at the intellect from the point of view of self-intellection, I shall not concern myself either with the metaphysical problems which surround emanation from the One and how and why the three hypostases and the physical world have the hierarchical structure that they do. The only issue with which I am concerned is self-intellection as a response to Sextus' paradox.

³⁸⁷ 6.2 [43].8.11-12. Trans: '[Intellect is a thought] that thinks in itself and not outside.'

³⁸⁸ The Armstrong edition misprints this as ὅλος.

³⁸⁹ 5.9 [5].8.1-4. Trans: 'If then the thought [of intellect] is of what is within it, that which is within it is its immanent form, and this is the Idea. What then is this? Intellect and the intelligent substance; each individual Idea is not other than intellect, but each is intellect. And intellect as a whole is all the Forms, ...'. Also cf. 5.9 [5].3.4-8. The Middle Platonists, such as Albinus, spoke of the forms as the ideas of God. For a thorough study of the Middle Platonic tradition, see J. Dillon, The Middle Platonists (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1977).

³⁹⁰ 5.9 [5].5.13-14. Trans: 'It being clear that, being intellect, it really thinks the real beings and

It is generative of them.³⁹¹ As a consequence, these objects -- the intelligibles -- do not enjoy an independent existence outside of the intellect. Their ontological status is dependent on their being thought by νοῦς:

[ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἄυλα] ἃ δ' ἔστιν ἄυλα, εἰ νενόηται, τοῦτ' ἔστιν αὐτοῖς
τὸ εἶναι.³⁹²

Of course, this is to be expected given that these objects are internal to the intellect. However, such an account, if taken out of context, eclipses what is, in fact, a reciprocal relation. For these objects by being thought confer existence upon that which thinks them. In a sense, they make the intellect the intellect:

ἕκαστον δὲ αὐτῶν νοῦς καὶ ὄν ἐστι καὶ τὸ σύμπαν πᾶς νοῦς καὶ πᾶν
ὄν, ὁ μὲν νοῦς κατὰ τὸ νοεῖν ὑφίστας τὸ ὄν, τὸ δὲ ὄν τῷ νοεῖσθαι τῷ
νῷ διδόν τὸ νοεῖν καὶ τὸ εἶναι.³⁹³

and at 5.4 [7].2 we read:

νόησις δὲ τὸ νοητὸν ὁρῶσα καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ἐπιστραφεῖσα καὶ ἀπ'
ἐκείνου οἶον ἀποτελειούμενη [καὶ τελειούμενη], ἀόριστος μὲν αὐτὴ
ὥσπερ ὅψις, ὀριζομένη δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ.³⁹⁴

There are two reasons for Plotinus to place so much emphasis on the ontological status of the intelligibles: Firstly, the objects which the intellect thinks are intended to be real living entities, as opposed to what Plotinus sometimes calls the lifeless abstractions of the Stoics (τά λεκτά).³⁹⁵ What subsists (ὑφίστησιν) for the Stoics exists (ὑφίστησιν) for Plotinus. Secondly, Plotinus is a good Platonist in the sense that these objects are supposed to be causes of the many particular instantiations of them in the spatio-temporal realm.³⁹⁶ As for the nature of this reciprocal relation between the intellect and

establishes them in existence.' Also cf. 6.7 [38].2.25-27.

³⁹¹ cf. 6.7 [38].40.11-15.

³⁹² 6.2 [43].8.4-5. Trans: 'But if things which are without matter have been thought, this is their being.' Henry and Schwyzer delete ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἄυλα. See Henry and Schwyzer, *Plotini Opera*, vol. III, p. 65.

³⁹³ 5.1 [10].4.27-30. Trans: 'But each of them is intellect and being, and the whole is universal intellect and being, intellect making being exist in thinking it, and being giving intellect thinking and existence by being thought.' Cf. 3.8 [30].8.7-9 and 6.7 [38].41.18-21.

³⁹⁴ 5.4 [7].2.4-7. Trans: 'Thinking, which sees the intelligible and turns towards it and is, in a way, being perfected by it, is itself indefinite like seeing, but is defined by the intelligible.' Yet, by the same token, at 5.4 [7].2.44-47 Plotinus explicitly rules out the objects of the intellect taking priority and coming first. For Plotinus is explicit in this matter: νοῦς δὲ καὶ ὄν ταυτόν. οὐ γὰρ τῶν πραγμάτων -- ὥσπερ ἡ αἴσθησις τῶν αἰσθητῶν -- προόντων, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς νοῦς τὰ πράγματα, εἴπερ μὴ εἶδη αὐτῶν κομίζεται. (Trans: 'Intellect and being are one and the same thing; for intellect does not apprehend objects that pre-exist it -- as sense does sense-objects -- but intellect itself is its objects, granted that it does not get their forms from somewhere else [for where could it get them from?].')

³⁹⁵ cf. 5.4 [7].2.43 and 5.5 [32].1.38-9 Also cf. E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 40.

³⁹⁶ cf. 6.3.9.24-9. Also cf. L. Gerson, *Plotinus*, pp. 45-6.

its objects (i.e. whether it is causal or logical), I think the answer would have to be that it is stronger than simply a logical relation. It is not mere coextensivity. However, one hesitates to speak of it in causal terms because both the intellect and its object are eternally coexistent.³⁹⁷ Each side acts upon or makes the other what it is.³⁹⁸

Given such a dynamic relation, my next task is clear: to explain how this dynamic relation between the intellectual subject and its object(s) is compatible with the identity condition which is supposed to hold between both sides. To put it another way, how can Plotinus hold these two apparently incompatible theses: The intellect and its objects form a complex dynamic whole -- what he refers to elsewhere as *συμπλοκή καὶ σύνθεσις* -- and yet they are identical.³⁹⁹

To be able to understand how the relation between the intellect and the ideas can allow for both complexity and identity, it is necessary to have a sense of how the intellect is occupied by these objects. How exactly do the ideas, the intellect's objects, inhere in it?⁴⁰⁰ According to Plotinus' account, the intellect is not filled with discrete objects, like a Trojan horse filled with a group of warriors. The ideas do not constitute discrete parts within the intellect. For that matter, the notion of parts, in this noetic context, is entirely misplaced:

οὐ δὴ ἐκεῖνος ὁ νοῦς τοιοῦτος, ἀλλ' ἔχει πάντα καὶ ἔστι πάντα καὶ
σύνεστιν αὐτῷ συνὼν καὶ ἔχει πάντα οὐκ ἔχων. οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα, ὁ δὲ
ἄλλος· οὐδὲ χωρὶς ἑκάστον τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ· ὅλον τε γάρ ἐστιν ἑκάστον
καὶ πανταχῇ πᾶν.⁴⁰¹

Thus the intellect is not a nexus in which part 'a' is external to part 'b'. Rather each part -- using the term very loosely -- contains the whole.⁴⁰² Plotinus elsewhere employs the

³⁹⁷ cf. 1.1 [53].8.4-6, 3.7 [45].3.36-8 and 3.7 [45].5.25-8.

³⁹⁸ Perhaps, it might be more helpful just to speak of the two sides, the epistemic subject and its objects, as having a dynamic relation and not a causal, so as to avoid confusion with the fact that the One is the cause of the intellect by way of emanation. Regardless of this, what is crucial for my purposes is that the reciprocal relation between the two sides is understood as something which is not exclusively logical.

³⁹⁹ 6.2 [43].21.53ff.

⁴⁰⁰ Plotinus certainly does not intend us to take the noetic world in a literal spatial sense. He is explicit that there is no place in that realm: καὶ οὐδὲ τόπος ἐκεῖ· (6.2 [43].16.5). For what it is worth, Plotinus does actually use the term νοητός τόπος twice in 6.7. [38].35.5 and 41. However, on these occasions, he is using it for rhetorical purposes, quoting from Plato's *Republic*, 508c and 517b. The closest Plotinus comes to the notion of place is when he says that each intelligible is the same as its place (χώρα), 5.8 [31].4.18.

⁴⁰¹ 1.8 [51].2.15-20. Trans: 'Intellect there is not like this, but has all things and is all things, and is with them when it is with itself and has all things without having them. For it is not one thing and they another; nor is each individual thing in it separate; for each is the whole and in all ways all.'

⁴⁰² Emilsson, I think, states this very obscure matter very well when he remarks: 'Plotinus, ..., claims that the intellect and the ideas are not even two distinct parts or aspects of a thing unified into one (as one might say that the hard disk and the screen of a computer are one); they are one in a much stronger sense

Anaxagorean phrase to express what he means: ἀλλ' ὁμοῦ ἐν ἐνὶ πάντα.⁴⁰³ It is not the case that one part of the intellectual structure grasps another part of that same intellectual structure *qua* part:

... ἐκεῖ δὲ ἐξ ὅλοῦ αἰεὶ ἕκαστον καὶ ἅμα ἕκαστον καὶ ὅλον·
φαντάζεται μὲν γὰρ μέρος, ἐνορᾶται δὲ τῷ ὅξει τὴν ὅψιν ὅλον, ...⁴⁰⁴

The reason Plotinus will not tolerate a mereological account of the intellect, at least not an exclusively discrete one, is because, if such were the case, then the intellectual subject and the intelligible object would be vulnerable to the claim that they did not entirely interpenetrate one another. And for Plotinus it is crucial that they do. Otherwise, the intellect will stand in a similar relation to its objects as did discursive reason: two things which are external to one another. And if that were the case, the intellect would rely upon images. Accordingly, Plotinus remarks of the intellectual realm: ὁ δὲ τόπος ἐκεῖ νοερῶς τὸ ἄλλο ἐν ἄλλῳ.⁴⁰⁵ Essentially Plotinus is after intertwined complexity (συμπλοκὴ καὶ σύνθεσις), along with complete interpenetration and some kind of identity. Thus there are very good grounds for claiming that the resolution of one attack of the Sceptics -- the overcoming of images by interpenetration of the intellectual subject and its object -- forces Plotinus to address another, Sextus' paradox.

IV Sextus' Paradox Revisited

Now as Plotinus is clearly not interested in a part/part account of the intellect, the only

so that each idea in all of its parts is intellect and intellect is throughout ideas; thus, in Plotinus intellect without ideas is an impossibility and likewise ideas without intellect.' E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 21. Gerson, I think wrongly, does speak of the forms in this context in terms of being aspects of the intellect. The problem with aspects, *pace* Emilsson, is that they do not allow for the required transparency which is so crucial to Plotinus. L. Gerson, 'Plotinus', pp. 50-1. Gerson actually does use the term partial identity (p. 51) by which he means the ideas partially overlap. There is an analogous problem in Plotinus about how the individual intellect, which we all supposedly have, can contain the entirety of all intellect, what Plotinus refers to as the πᾶς. For a discussion of this problem, see G.J.P. O'Daly, Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self, pp. 62-3.

⁴⁰³ 6.6 [34].7.4. Trans: '..., but all things together in one.' The phrase 'ὁμοῦ πάντα' occurs in the beginning of Anaxagoras' book, Fr. B1 D-K.

⁴⁰⁴ 5.8 [31].4.22-25. Trans: 'But there each comes only from the whole and is a part and a whole at once; for it has the appearance of a part, but a penetrating look sees the whole in it,' Plotinus goes on to compare it to the legend of Lynceus, an individual who was supposed to have looked into the inside of the earth, see Apollonius Rhodius I 151-5.

⁴⁰⁵ 5.9 [5].10.10. Trans: 'And place there exists in the intellectual mode, the presence of one thing in another.' Elsewhere we are told that the two sides, the subject and object, are fused together (συγκραθέντας αὐτοῖς), 5.5 [32].2.1-9.

other alternative -- at least according to Sextus, given his materialist presuppositions⁴⁰⁶ -- is the whole/whole. The main obstacle in attributing a whole/whole reading to self-intellection is its apparent incompatibility with the subject-object distinction. Recall Sextus' argument:

καὶ ὅλος μὲν [sc. νοῦς] ἑαυτὸν καταλαμβάνεσθαι οὐκ ἂν δυνηθείη.
εἰ γὰρ ὅλος ἑαυτὸν καταλαμβάνεται, ὅλος ἔσται κατάληψις καὶ
καταλαμβάνων, ὅλου δ' ὄντος τοῦ καταλαμβάνοντος οὐδὲν ἔτι
ἔσται τὸ καταλαμβανόμενον· ... εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὅλον, οὐδὲν ἔσται τὸ
ζητούμενον.⁴⁰⁷

It is crucial to Plotinus' position that he can respond to this objection in such a way as not to rule out the subject-object distinction.⁴⁰⁸ If he cannot, the claim that his is an account which offers us an adequate basis for a theory of self-intellection would be open to criticism. For Sextus' paradox prohibits the subject from having itself as object of intellection. That Plotinus was sensitive to Sextus' attack on self-intellection is clear from the manner in which he himself addresses the problem about what does and does not qualify for self-intellection.⁴⁰⁹ To illustrate this, Plotinus explains that an awareness or apprehension which we might have of our historical self does not qualify as self-intellection precisely because in that context it is a matter of one part thinking or perceiving another part:

οὐ γὰρ τὸ πᾶν ἔσται ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ ἐγνωσμένον, μὴ κάκείνου τοῦ
νοήσαντος τὰ ἄλλα τὰ σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ ἑαυτὸ νενοηκότος, ἔσται τε οὐ
τὸ ζητούμενον⁴¹⁰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἑαυτό, ἀλλ' ἄλλο ἄλλο.⁴¹¹

This sort of part/part account in which one part of ourself is aware of another part of

⁴⁰⁶ Sextus only canvasses two possibilities because of this materialist presuppositions. In other words, it is the implicit materialism of his paradox which enables him to take the part/part and whole/whole options to be exhaustive. If anything, the fact that Plotinus discards the mereological account and then offers an account in which he explicitly speaks of whole against whole (see below) could be taken, or is at least is plausible, as evidence that he is working within the Sextan framework. For he does not canvass any other sort of option.

⁴⁰⁷ Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII 311-312. Trans: 'Now it will not be able as a whole to apprehend itself. For if as a whole it apprehends itself, it will be as a whole apprehension and apprehending, and, the apprehending subject being the whole, the apprehended object will no longer be anything; ... If as a whole, the object sought will be nothing.'

⁴⁰⁸ This is exactly Emilsson's point. His interpretation of Plotinus, based upon 5.3 [49].5, is that Plotinus accepts Sextus' point, abandoning the subject-object distinction. E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 33. I shall come back to Emilsson's account below.

⁴⁰⁹ cf. n. 355.

⁴¹⁰ Even some of Plotinus' phraseology is strikingly similar to Sextus'. So we read in Sextus: οὐδὲν ἔσται τὸ ζητούμενον, while in Plotinus we find: ἔσται τε οὐ τὸ ζητούμενον.

⁴¹¹ 5.3 [49].1.9-13. Trans: 'For it would not be the whole which was known in these circumstances, if that thing which thought the others which were with it did not also think itself, and this will be, not what we are looking for, a thing which thinks itself, but one thing thinking another.'

ourself, fails because the thinker and its object of thought do not entirely interpenetrate one another. In the case of one's empirical self-awareness, we have two distinct and different things, one of which is aware of the other, such as the rational part of my soul contemplating my body or the perceptive part seeing my body. So how can Plotinus integrate both subject-object distinction along with the whole/whole account? For the former entails heterogeneity or difference and the latter identity. The possibility of giving an account in which the noetic subject can be its own object in a fully transparent manner, requires that these two theses somehow be shown to be compatible. In other words, an adequate theory of self-intellection is contingent upon showing that Emilsson is wrong and that the whole/whole reading can be made compatible with the subject-object distinction.

V The μέγιστα γενή

In order to come to grips with these relations which are pulling in different directions, I must delve deeper into the internal structure of the intellect, which brings me to the μέγιστα γενή of the Sophist; or rather Plotinus' interpretation of them. For the intellect is constituted out of them:

ὁ δὲ νοῦς ὄν νοοῦν καὶ σύνθετον ἐκ πάντων, οὐχ ἓν τι τῶν γενῶν.⁴¹²

Thus it is in terms of being, motion, rest, sameness and otherness that Plotinus articulates the formal structure of the intellect's activity; how it is that the intellect is a ἓν πολλά.⁴¹³ The μέγιστα γενή make up the conceptual skeleton of the intellect's ἐνέργεια. Taking Ennead 6.2 as my guide, according to Plotinus it is incorrect to speak of the being of the intellect without concurrently (ἅμα) speaking of its movement (κίνησις).⁴¹⁴ For the latter is the activity (ἐνέργεια) of that which is actively actual.⁴¹⁵ As Plotinus says elsewhere, if the intellect stands still, it does not think: εἰ δ' ἔστηκεν,

⁴¹² 6.2 [43].18.11-12. Trans: 'But the intellect, since it is being as intelligent and a composite of all [the genera], is not one of the genera.'

⁴¹³ 6.2 [43].8.25-50 and 6.2 [43].15.1-19. Of course, the γενή are not exclusive to the intellect. They apply to everything, save the One.

⁴¹⁴ 6.2 [43].15.11.

⁴¹⁵ 6.2 [43].15.9.

οὐ νοεῖ.⁴¹⁶ Rest (στάσις) arises because κίνησις is not a changing of being's nature but rather its perfection.⁴¹⁷ Being throughout exists in the same state and in the same way.⁴¹⁸ Otherness enters into the account when distinguishing being, motion and rest from one another;⁴¹⁹ that is, when the intellect is grasped in its conceptual diversity, i.e. as πολλά.⁴²⁰ And sameness when the three are grasped in their unity, i.e. as ἓν.⁴²¹ For the intellect, despite being all three, is also one.⁴²² The γενή, therefore, are one way of seeing how the intellect is, to quote, a ἓν πολλά.⁴²³

The epistemological motivation for such a move is clear: internal differentiation that accounts, at least in part, for the intellect having itself as an object of intellection. Internal differentiation of some sort is necessary if the intellect is to have itself as an intellectual object, and yet simultaneously be the subject of the intellectual act. The question is whether or not the μέγιστα γενή in their application to the intellect are sufficient to account for such an epistemic relation. Do the μέγιστα γενή prevent the intellect from being reduced to a simple inert entity, what Plotinus elsewhere refers to as an inert lump (ὄγκος)?⁴²⁴ They do to this extent: the μέγιστα γενή show how it is that the intellect can be an ἐνέργεια. For intelligising in the context of the intellect requires both self-identity (or, perhaps, self-sameness is more correct) and self-otherness or difference,⁴²⁵ i.e. different intellectual stages or intellectual moments which are not simply identical with one another but rather that lend themselves to being distinguished:

διὸ καὶ ὀρθῶς ἑτερότητα λαμβάνει, ὅπου νοῦς καὶ οὐσία. δεῖ γὰρ τὸν νοῦν ἀεὶ ἑτερότητα καὶ ταυτότητα λαμβάνειν, εἴπερ νοήσῃ.⁴²⁶

⁴¹⁶ 6.7 [38].13.39-40.

⁴¹⁷ 6.2 [43].7.26-28.

⁴¹⁸ 6.2 [43].7.30-31.

⁴¹⁹ 6.2 [43].8.35-37.

⁴²⁰ 6.2 [43].15.14-15

⁴²¹ 6.2 [43].8.37-38. This is not the only delineation that Plotinus offers of the five γενή. In 5.1 [10].4, he first discusses same and other and then introduces motion and rest.

⁴²² 6.2 [43].15.14-15.

⁴²³ 6.2 [43].15.15. Of course, one might object and say that the μέγιστα γενή apply to everything save the One and so are not unique to the intellect. They do but not in the same way. When it comes to the intellect, we are looking at something strictly from a self-relational point of view.

⁴²⁴ 6.7 [38].14.8-11.

⁴²⁵ It must be borne in mind that Plotinus' account of the intellect in this context of self-identity and otherness draws heavily on Plato's *Parmenides* (in particular the second hypothesis), a dialogue the dialectical exercise of which was not taken lightly by Plotinus and the Neoplatonists. See n. 385 and also L. Gerson, *Plotinus*, p. 45, n.9.

⁴²⁶ 6.7 [38].39.4-7. Trans: 'Therefore he [Plato] rightly understands that there is otherness and sameness where there is intellect and substance. For one must always understand intellect as otherness and sameness if it is going to think.' Also cf. 5.1 [10].4.34-35.

If such distinctions were denied to the intellect, it would be impossible to distinguish conceptually between that which thinks and that which is thought. By ruling out the μέγιστα γενή, it becomes impossible to apprehend how the intellect could have a relation in which it is simultaneously the thinking subject and its own object of thought. For to do so, presupposes that the intellect is capable of having internal epistemic relations, in particular having itself as an object of thought. But without the μέγιστα γενή, there would be a risk that the intellect was incapable of entertaining that or any other sort of relation, save simple self-identity. And if that were the case, Plotinus' account of intellection would be vulnerable to the objection that his account of the thinking is, at best, inconsistent and, at worst, contradictory, given his earlier claim that all thinking is of something (τινός).⁴²⁷ It is essential, therefore, to have some way of understanding how the intellect can become more than one when thinking itself:

νοήσας δὲ αὐτὸς πολλὺς γίνεται, νοητός, νοῶν, κινούμενος καὶ ὅσα
ἄλλα προσήκει νῶ.⁴²⁸

If not, the result is something which is in a state of utter simplicity and, as a result, incapable of the intellectual process:

δεῖ ἄρα ἓν εἶναι ἅμφω -- εἴτε ἓν μὲν, μὴ δύο δὲ αὖ ἔσται, ὅ τι νοήσῃ
οὐχ ἔξει· ὥστε οὐδὲ νοοῦν ἔσται. ἀπλοῦν ἄρα [sc. τὸ νοεῖν] καὶ οὐχ
ἀπλοῦν δεῖ εἶναι.⁴²⁹

or at least the Plotinian description of it. Thus the μέγιστα γενή offer us a way of getting around the problem of simple identity without necessarily creating a plurality of existentially independent entities, which is necessary for any theory of self-intellection.

VI

The Noetic Intellect's Relation to Itself Revisited

Having set out this formal structure of the intellect along with the need for its internal differentiation, I now need to say something about how that account -- an account which is the basis for the subject-object distinction -- is not incompatible with the whole/whole

⁴²⁷ cf. n. 359.

⁴²⁸ 6.7 [38].39.14-16. Trans: 'But if he himself thinks he becomes many, intelligible, intelligent, in motion and everything else appropriate to Intellect.' Similarly, at 5.6 [24].3.22ff. we read: 'εἰ οὖν τῷ νοοῦντι πλῆθος, δεῖ ἓν τῷ (μὴ) πλήθει τὸ νοεῖν μὴ εἶναι. Trans: 'If, therefore, there is multiplicity in the thinking principle, there cannot be thinking in what is not multiplicity.'

⁴²⁹ 5.6 [24].1.12-14. Trans: 'It is necessary therefore to be one and a pair -- but if it is, on the other hand, one and not two, it will have nothing to think: so that it will not even be a thinking principle.'

account of the intellect. I need to show that Plotinus' claim that when the intellect thinks itself, being one, it becomes two (ἄμφω οὖν γίνεται ἐν ὄν)⁴³⁰ can somehow be reconciled with Plotinus' other claim (the one upon which Emilsson bases his interpretation):

εἰ δ' αὐτὰ ἔχει, οὐκ ἰδὼν αὐτὰ ἐκ τοῦ μερίσαι αὐτὸν ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἦν πρὶν μερίσαι ἑαυτὸν καὶ θεωρῶν καὶ ἔχων. εἰ τοῦτο, δεῖ τὴν θεωρίαν ταῦτόν εἶναι τῷ θεωρητῷ, καὶ τὸν νοῦν ταῦτόν εἶναι τῷ νοητῷ.⁴³¹

The background to this argument from 5.3 [49].5 is that the intellect always possesses its objects. If this were not the case, the intellect would be vulnerable to the claim that it focused upon images.⁴³² In virtue of having its objects at each logical or conceptual stage of its activity, Plotinus concludes that the contemplator and the contemplated are the same (ταυτόν). Consequently, the distinction between the subject and object is untenable, or so Emilsson claims. Disregarding the evidence from the previous section about the need for the subject-object distinction, I think that the passage just quoted is not incompatible with this distinction once it is made clear how Plotinus understands such a distinction.

For a start, that the activity of the intellect is constitutive of multiplicity within itself is clear. Plotinus speaks of there being a sort of internal occurrence (οἶον παρεμπεσόν) when the intellect thinks itself, and it is this which makes it, the intellect, many:

εἰ οὖν νοῦς, ὅτι πολὺς ἐστὶ, καὶ τό νοεῖν αὐτὸ οἶον παρεμπεσόν, κἂν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ᾗ, πληθύνει, ...⁴³³

Now we know that the intellect's multiplicity, a multiplicity which is due to the intellect becoming two, i.e. a subject and object, will not be a plurality of parts.⁴³⁴ Yet neither does Plotinus regard the noetic subject and its object as two different wholes *qua* substance; that is, two separate individuated objects which are simply existentially

⁴³⁰ 5.6 [24].1.6.

⁴³¹ 5.3 [49].5.20-23. Trans: 'But if it [intellect] has them [the intelligibles] themselves, it does not see them as a result of dividing itself, but it was contemplator and possessor before it divided itself. But if this is so, the contemplation must be the same as the contemplated, and intellect the same as the intelligible.' See E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 33.

⁴³² 5.3 [49].5.17-20.

⁴³³ 5.3 [49].11.26-28. Trans: 'If then intellect is intellect because it is multiple, and thinking itself, even if it derives from intellect, is a sort of internal occurrence that makes it multiple. ...' Cf. 6.9 [9].9.8 for another occurrence of παρεμπίπτω.

⁴³⁴ To this extent I agree with Emilsson.

independent of one another:

τὸ [sc. νοεῖν] δὲ οὐ κεχώρισται τῇ οὐσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ συνὸν αὐτῷ ὅρᾳ
ἑαυτό.⁴³⁵

If he did, then he could not claim, as he so often does, that the act of intellection entails self-intellection. Rather, for Plotinus internal differentiation takes the form of different internal activities or different active states. Thus, immediately after speaking of self-intellection as involving a sort of internal occurrence (οἶον παρεμπεσόν), Plotinus speaks of the multiplicity of ἐνέργειαι within the intellect:

καὶ τί κωλύει οὕτω πλῆθος εἶναι, ἕως ἐστὶν οὐσία μία; τὸ γὰρ
πλῆθος [sc. τοῦ νοεῖν] οὐ συνθέσεις, ἀλλ' αἱ ἐνέργειαι αὐτοῦ τὸ
πλῆθος.⁴³⁶

Now given that the part/part reading has been ruled out, these active states must be wholes. Moreover, as the multiplicity of the intellect -- at least in part⁴³⁷ -- is accounted for by the duality of subject and object, it follows that the subject and object will also have to be thought of as wholes. And that, in short this is Plotinus' answer to Sextus, save one qualification: It is not a duality but a triad. The structure of the intellect consists of the intellectual subject (νοῦς), the intelligible object (νοητόν) and the act of thinking (νόησις), all of which are to be understood as wholes. But as they are not different wholes *qua* substance, their status as wholes will have to be understood in some other manner, i.e. active states or ἐνέργειαι, all of which are of the same whole *qua* substance.⁴³⁸ Such an account, i.e. attribution of different states to the whole, enables Plotinus to deal with Sextus' objection (on one level anyway) because the necessary slots which are required for self-intellection -- subject and object -- can be

⁴³⁵ 5.6 [24].1.5-6. Trans: 'But intellect is not distinct *qua* substance, but keeps company with itself and so sees itself.'

⁴³⁶ 5.3 [49].12.1-3. Trans: 'But what prevents it from being a multiplicity in this sense, as long as it is one substance. For the multiplicity [of intellect] is not a plurality of compositions but its activities are the multiplicity.' Although the term 'states' is not Plotinus' own, I don't think it unfair of me to use it, since it does capture what, I think, Plotinus is getting at when he talks about the intellect *qua* thinker, as opposed to object thought. I could just as easily use the term 'disposition' (or even 'sense') and say the intellect has different dispositions which amounts to the same thing, but again this is not Plotinus' own term. The important point to get across is that intellect does have logical moments that differ from one another *connotationally*.

⁴³⁷ I say in part because obviously the plurality of intelligibles is also constitutive of plurality. However, the plurality of intelligibles already presupposes the distinction between the subject and object, and thus is of derivative importance to my account of self-intellection.

⁴³⁸ It should be noted that Plotinus is not always consistent in his use of these three terms, cf. J. Bussanich, The One and its Relation to the Intellect in Plotinus, p. 58. However, at 5.3 [49].5.44-50 (the passage which I shall come to below and which concludes the chapter upon which Emilsson bases his interpretation) it is clear that they do represent different states of the intellectual whole.

filled or satisfied by this one whole, the intellect. For Plotinus could argue in response to Sextus that intellect *qua* whole acts on itself *qua* whole, both being the same whole *qua* substance but different *qua* states. Self-intellection, therefore, would consist in intellect *qua* S₁ bringing itself against itself *qua* S₂.⁴³⁹

τὰ γὰρ ὄντα ὁρῶν ἑαυτὸν ἑώρα καὶ ὁρῶν ἐνεργείᾳ ἦν καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτός· νοῦς γὰρ καὶ νόησις ἓν· καὶ ὅλος ὅλῳ, οὐ μέρει ἄλλο μέρος.⁴⁴⁰

This would allow the intellect to be conceptually divided on one level, while leaving its identity relation intact on another. Each active state is the whole, just with a specific connotation that can be differentiated from the other ones. So, for example, the intellect *qua* thinking subject is different from the intellect *qua* intelligible object. One thinks and the other is thought. So too with the act of thinking, it is different from that which has the power⁴⁴¹ to think and that which can be thought. Such connotational differences are what enables Plotinus to circumvent Sextus' paradox:

... καὶ ἔστιν οὐχ ἕτερον ἢ νόησις καὶ ἡ οὐσία αὕτη καὶ αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν νοεῖ ἢ φύσις, οὐχ ἕτερον, ἀλλ' ἢ λόγῳ, τὸ νοούμενον καὶ τὸ νοοῦν, πλῆθος ὄν, ὡς δέδεικται πολλαχῇ.⁴⁴²

Because of these connotational differences, Plotinus' account of self-intellection avoids the pitfall of simple identity. For without them, the intellect could not have itself as an object of intellection:

ὅλως δὲ οὐχ ἀπλοῦς γίνεται νοῶν ἑαυτόν, ἀλλὰ δεῖ τὴν νόησιν τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ ἑτέρου εἶναι, εἴ τι ὅλως δύναιτο νοεῖν αὐτό.⁴⁴³

Yet by the same token -- and this is the crucial bit -- Plotinus' notion of wholes, while

⁴³⁹ Of course, one could argue that such connotational differences were open to Aristotle. Therefore, why did he not employ them as a means of escaping from the identity thesis which undermined his account of self-intellection? The answer to this question is that, while he did have access to such connotational differences, he had them in the guise of *potentiality*. Accordingly, when it came to expressing his account in terms of *actuality*, only then could the force of the identity thesis be fully felt. Plotinus, on the other hand, has these connotational differences at the level of actuality. Thus his account of self-intellection does not fall prey to such a strong identity thesis.

⁴⁴⁰ 5.3 [49].6.6-8. Trans: 'For in seeing the real beings it saw itself, and in seeing, it was in act, and its actuality was itself: for intellect and intellection are one; and it thinks as a whole with the whole of itself and not one part of itself with another.' cf. 2.9 [33].1.33ff. and G.J.P. O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self*, pp. 75-6 on the identity of subject and act.

⁴⁴¹ Plotinus does sometimes refer to the intellect as having certain powers (δυνάμεις), powers which are always actualised, cf. 6.7 [38].35.21.

⁴⁴² 6.7 [38].40.16-19. Trans: '... and the thought and this substance are not different things, and, again in that the nature thinks itself, they are not different except in definition, what is thought and what thinks, that is, a plurality, as has often been demonstrated.'

⁴⁴³ 6.7 [38].39.12-13. Trans: 'But in general intellect is not simple when it thinks itself, but its thought about itself must be thought of another if it is to be able to think itself as anything at all.'

satisfying the subject and object requirement, allows for the intellectual subject to have itself as object in completely transparent manner. For, as Plotinus is keen to emphasis, the intellectual process is a completely transparent one:

διαφανῇ γὰρ πάντα καὶ σκοτεινὸν οὐδὲ ἀντίτυπον οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ πᾶς
παντὶ φανερὸς εἰς τὸ εἶσω καὶ πάντα.⁴⁴⁴

No whole -- be it νοῦς, νόησις, or νοητόν -- eclipses any of the other wholes. For when one comes up against another it sees itself. Accordingly, Plotinus concludes 5.3 [49].5 (the chapter on which Emilsson bases his interpretation) by distinguishing these three states from one another, while also asserting an identity thesis which binds them together:

ἐν ᾧμα πάντα ἔσται, νοῦς, νόησις, τὸ νοητόν. εἰ οὖν ἡ νόησις αὐτοῦ
τὸ νοητόν, τὸ δὲ νοητόν αὐτός, αὐτὸς ἄρα ἑαυτὸν νοήσει· νοήσει γὰρ
τῇ νοήσει, ὅπερ ἦν αὐτός, καὶ νοήσει τὸ νοητόν, ὅπερ ἦν αὐτός. καθ'
ἐκάτερον ἄρα ἑαυτὸν νοήσει, καθότι καὶ ἡ νόησις αὐτὸς ἦν, καὶ
καθότι τὸ νοητόν αὐτός, ὅπερ ἐνόει τῇ νοήσει, ὃ ἦν αὐτός.⁴⁴⁵

Now, if my interpretation of Plotinus can be shown to hold, it would be adequate to act as a basis for a coherent theory of self-intellection. For wholes and transparency, if they can be combined, enable the subject to have itself as an object of intellection, without the former being swallowed by the latter. Rather the account allows for a type of identity thesis to hold between the subject and object, which is crucial for any theory of self-intellection but it does so in a novel and unique way; by allotting a pivotal role to νόησις, the act of the intellectual subject. Through placing as much emphasis on νόησις as Plotinus does, the subject never loses sight of itself in being identified with its object.⁴⁴⁶ For the sake of clarity, let me call this new identity relation or thesis *epistemic identity*, given that it is founded upon the intellectual subject's act. The reason the epistemic subject never loses sight of itself in this act -- never becomes opaque but always remains transparent to itself -- is because this act is generated by or from it. Plotinus, breaking from the Aristotelian tradition, is actually allotting an active

⁴⁴⁴ 5.8 [31].4.5-6. Trans: 'For all things there are transparent, and there is nothing dark or opaque; everything and all things are clear to the inmost part to everything.' Cf. 5.8 [31].4.22-25.

⁴⁴⁵ 5.3 [49].5.43-50. Trans: 'All together are one, intellect, intellection, the intelligible. If therefore intellect's intellection is the intelligible, and the intelligible is itself, it will itself think itself: for it will think with the intellection which it is itself and will think the intelligible, which is itself. In both ways, then, it will think itself, in that intellection is itself and in that the intelligible is itself which it thinks in its intellection and which is itself.'

⁴⁴⁶ cf. n. 440.

role to intellectual subject in its relation with its object, namely itself.⁴⁴⁷ In order to see how Plotinus can successfully achieve such an identity relation, i.e. *epistemic identity*, in which the intellectual subject and object are the same as one another, yet connotationally differentiated but transparently so, I want to conclude with an examination of the Plotinus' original reworking of the traditional light analogy; an analogy which he employs to illustrate the noetic process, and the identity thesis -- what I call *epistemic identity* -- around which it operates.

VII Light

If we return to the διαφανῆ passage quoted above from 5.8 [31].4, Plotinus, as he does elsewhere, employs the image of light illuminating light: φῶς γὰρ [sc. ἐστὶ διαφανές] φωτί.⁴⁴⁸ By Plotinus' time, the light analogy had a very long tradition. The two most obvious instances being Plato's Republic and Aristotle's De Anima.⁴⁴⁹ What both of these passages have in common is that they are structured in such a way that the Sun and the active intellect, respectively, are that *in virtue of which* the visible or intelligible objects are able to act upon the seer or the thinker. For in both instances they actualise the medium in such a way that objects become visible or intelligible. The Sun in the Republic does this by emitting light and the active intellect by being in a certain state like light.⁴⁵⁰ Now there can be little doubt that Plotinus was very well aware of both these passages and this traditional use of light.⁴⁵¹ With this in mind, one can appreciate what a significant shift there is in his reworking of this famous analogy. For Plotinus radically alters the relation between the intellectual subject, the light and the object illuminated by the light:

ἐκεῖ δὲ οὐ δι' ἑτέρου, ἀλλὰ δι' αὐτῆς, ὅτι μηδὲ ἕξω. ἄλλω οὖν φωτί

⁴⁴⁷ cf. E.K. Emilsson, 'Plotinus on the Objects of Thought', p. 41.

⁴⁴⁸ 5.8 [31].4.6. Also cf. 5.6 [24].1.16-22 .

⁴⁴⁹ Republic 509b2-20 and D.A. 430a15-17.

⁴⁵⁰ Obviously, I am not trying to imply that Sun and the active intellect are identical analogies, since the scope of the latter is much broader than the former. Nonetheless they do have somewhat similar roles in the context of allowing for the epistemic subject to be acted upon.

⁴⁵¹ Plotinus would certainly have known of the discussion of D.A. 3.5, if by no other means than through Alexander of Aphrodisias. We have already witnessed his lifting of the writing tablet analogy from D.A. 3.4. We also know he was aware of Plato's Sun analogy because he employs a very similar, if not identical, Sun analogy at 6.7 [38].16.25ff., when speaking of his first principle.

ἄλλο φῶς ὁρᾷ, οὐ δι' ἄλλου. φῶς ἄρα⁴⁵² φῶς ἄλλο ὁρᾷ· αὐτὸ ἄρα
αὐτὸ ὁρᾷ.⁴⁵³

In the noetic world (ἐκεῖ), seeing is not through another (δι' ἑτέρου) but through itself (δι' αὐτῆς). This is because the focus of the subject, the seer, is not directed outwards (ὅτι μηδὲ ἔξω). The first sentence of this passage, I think, implies that the intellect *qua* the subject of the perception, is its own medium. For it sees δι' αὐτῆς and, consequently, it itself establishes or generates the correct conditions for the occurrence of sight. In this context, the δι' is pivotal because it is indicative of what Plotinus considers to be passive and active. For if the intellect were to see δι' ἑτέρου (the traditional Platonic and Aristotelian usage), then there would be grounds for taking the medium to be external to the intellectual subject, with the result that when it, the medium, is in the proper state, i.e. activated, then and only then can the subject be acted upon by the intelligible object. Thus Plotinus, given his preference for δι' αὐτῆς as opposed to δι' ἑτέρου, clearly differs from both the Aristotelian and Platonic usage of light in this epistemological context. For, according to their analogies, the source of light was something independent of the subject. It is that which brought about the right conditions which in turn enabled the objects to act upon the epistemic subject.⁴⁵⁴ To make Plato and Aristotle conform to the Plotinian usage, we would have to say that the seer and the passive intellect themselves respectively activate the medium in such a way as to make the visibles or intelligibles actually visible or intelligible. In other words, they would have to make what they take to be passive active. That they do not, at least in part, can be traced to the fact that they do not develop this doctrine of noetic internality (ὅτι μηδὲ ἔξω), which is understandable since, as we have seen, Plotinus is partly motivated to do so because of the Sceptics and his response to them.

Plotinus concludes (οὖν) from the first sentence that the intellect being light

⁴⁵² The Armstrong edition misprints this as ἄρα.

⁴⁵³ 5.3 [49].8.21-24. Trans: 'But in the intelligible world, seeing is not through another [sc. medium], but through itself, because it is not directed outside. Intellect therefore sees one light with another, not through another. Light then sees another light: it therefore itself sees itself.' It should be noted that this sort of intellectual image of light meeting light can be found in Plato's *Timaeus* as an account of how actual vision works, cf. 45b2-d3. I thank Gerard O'Daly for pointing this out to me.

⁴⁵⁴ Recall that even with the Aristotelian usage from *D.A.* 3.5, it is only when the active intellect is in a certain state that the intelligibles are able to act upon the intellectual subject: '... ὁ [sc. νοῦς] δὲ τῷ πάντα ποιεῖν, ὡς ἔξις τις, οἷον τὸ φῶς· τρόπον γάρ τινα καὶ τὸ φῶς ποιεῖ τὰ δυνάμει ὄντα χρώματα ἐνεργείᾳ χρώματα.' Trans: '... and there is another (sc. intellect) which is so by producing all things, as a kind of disposition, like light does; for in a way light too makes colours which are potential into actual colours.'

(φῶς) sees another light (ἄλλο φῶς) with another light (ἄλλῳ φωτί) not through another (δι' ἄλλου). Are we to infer from this sentence that we are dealing with three different lights and, if so, exactly how are they different? Moreover, when intellect sees one light with another, what is the force of the 'with'? Taking the questions in order, we know that the lights are not different from one another as discrete parts of a whole differ from one another for two reasons: Plotinus has already rejected the part/part reading and light, at least according to Plotinus, is an incorporeal entity,⁴⁵⁵ rendering it indivisible.⁴⁵⁶ Moreover, we also know that we are not dealing with different separate independent substances (that is, different wholes *qua* substance), since he has already said in the opening sentence that the intellect's attention is not directed outwards. The light at which the intellect is looking must be itself. We are only examining one numerical entity as far as substance is concerned. For the seer, the seeing and the seen belong to the same thing. But the level of substance is not the only one with which we are working. And this brings us to the second question, the force of the 'with'.

I understand the 'with' to mean that the intellect itself, in addition to being the first light (φῶς), i.e. the intellectual subject, is the other light (ἄλλῳ φωτί) *qua* νόησις⁴⁵⁷ and that light brings itself to bear on the other light (ἄλλο φῶς) which is itself *qua* νοητόν. For if one compares this sentence to the sentence in the passage we had earlier, when discussing how none of the wholes eclipsed one another (νοήσκει γὰρ τῇ νοήσκει, ὅπερ ἦν αὐτός, καὶ νοήσκει τὸ νοητόν, ὅπερ ἦν αὐτός, 5.3 [49].5.43-50) one can see that the 'with' picks out the bringing of the intellect's self qualified in a specific way against itself qualified in another way;⁴⁵⁸ what could be called whole against whole. This interpretation of the sentence explains the choice of 'with' over 'through' in that 'with' in the present context, just as δι' αὐτῆς in the previous sentence, renders the subject active, whereas the 'through' would make it passive.⁴⁵⁹ For the 'with' articulates

⁴⁵⁵ 2.1 [40].7.26-28 and 4.5 [29].6-7.

⁴⁵⁶ According to Plotinus at 6.4 [22].8.18-19 only corporeal bodies are divisible, since they have magnitude.

⁴⁵⁷ cf. 5.3 [49].6.7-8 and n. 438.

⁴⁵⁸ The present passage which is under examination, much more than the one we had previously, emphasises the transparency of the wholes in no uncertain terms.

⁴⁵⁹ Just as there were probable grounds for saying that Plotinus was consciously altering the traditional light analogy, here it would seem as if he were consciously inverting the through/with dichotomy which, as we saw in Chapter III, is central to Socrates' account of the epistemic subject in the κοινά passage of the *Theaetetus*. For Plotinus either knows of the *Theaetetus* directly or through Alexander. Plotinus, by

the conceptual development or non-temporal sequences of the subject's act.⁴⁶⁰ It identifies the subject not just with the object but with the act as well.⁴⁶¹ Yet it also conceptually differentiates the subject and its act from that of which they are the object.

However, Plotinus does not jump from saying intellect sees one light with another to the final conclusion that intellect sees itself, i.e. self-intellection. Rather he offers the interim conclusion: $\phi\omega\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\rho\alpha \phi\omega\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron \acute{\omicron}\rho\acute{\alpha}$. Plotinus arrives at this conclusion, on my interpretation, because of the work the 'with' reading has done. For we now know that we are not dealing with something which is absolutely simple. There might only be one substance as such but if it is not capable of internal differentiation, then we are back to the simple identity claim. And if that is the case, then we have undercut the entire intellectual process. To put it another way, if we do not have this interim conclusion ($\phi\omega\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\rho\alpha \phi\omega\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron \acute{\omicron}\rho\acute{\alpha}$), we would have a *reductio*. For the argument would look something like this:

The object of the intellect's intellection is itself and so it can act as its own medium.

Both it and its object are the same thing *simpliciter*.

Simple identity rules out any sort of intellection.

Hence the intellect cannot think itself.

And so we would have contradicted the first premise. Hence the intellect being $\phi\omega\varsigma_{a1}$ sees $\phi\omega\varsigma_{a2}$. The second light is different from the first in as much as the first is the seeing seer and the second the seen, the intellectual subject and object. This provides, along with the act, the necessary internal differentiation for an intellectual process within one substance. Accordingly, it is crucial that $\phi\omega\varsigma_{a1}$ see $\phi\omega\varsigma_{a2}$ *qua* $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron$. By the same token however, since we are only dealing with one light, Plotinus is able to reach his desired conclusion of self-intellection.⁴⁶² For the lights might be $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron$ connotationally

using 'with' in this context, it would seem, is further emphasising the identity between the epistemic subject and the medium against a backdrop in the *Theaetetus* in which the two were heterogeneous, i.e. the epistemic subject and its sense organs. Cf. Myles Burnyeat, 'Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving', p. 29.

⁴⁶⁰ Plotinus' use of light at 5.5 [32].7.13ff does not contradict my argument, because that context, again, is one of the intellect's inner light.

⁴⁶¹ cf. n. 440.

⁴⁶² At the outset (n. 356), I said I hope to show that not only Emilsson was wrong in his interpretation of Plotinus but Gerson was as well. The problem with Gerson's interpretation, I suggest, is that it derives self-intellection in the wrong way. For he maintains that 'S knows P' is the same 'S knows that S knows P'. The truth of that claim I do not dispute. Moreover, that 'S knows that S knows P' need not be taken to be propositional, I also do not dispute. What I do dispute is that this is the manner in which Plotinus derives his notion of self-intellection. Rather, I would argue that because the intellectual subject is transparently couched in its object, it thinks itself and is directly self-reflexive. Gerson's account does not sufficiently account for the Aristotelian influence (see n. 384). However, I do follow Gerson in

but not substantially. Thus αὐτὸ ἅρα αὐτὸ ὁρᾷ. We have an identity relation, which tolerates internal differentiation. Moreover, it is a differentiation which takes the form of whole against whole, allowing for the subject-object distinction and yet not prohibiting the intellect from knowing itself. On the contrary, the whole/whole relation, according to Plotinus, is the only way in which the intellect could know itself fully. Hence just as Plotinus incorporated the Sceptic's attack on the reliability of impressions and actually employed it at the discursive level, here too he incorporates another attack, Sextus' paradox. It informs his account of self-intellection.

VIII The Resolution

So is Plotinus' account of the intellect's relation to itself adequate to accommodate a coherent theory of self-intellection? Yes. For what he has done, especially with his use of the light imagery, is not to only make the subject active, but has done so in such a way that the subject, being active, remains transparent to itself throughout the intellectual activity. It sees itself in its object *qua* thinking subject. For Plotinus' usage of light highlights how the subject is couched in its object such that it and its act are not opaque but transparent. This is very different from what we saw with Aristotle's identification of the subject and object. For he (and Plato) did not speak of seeing the medium itself. Plotinus' reference to light as an object is essentially the same as his remark in the second part this chapter, when he was quoted as saying that the intellect does not see an external object but rather sees the seeing.⁴⁶³ It sees its activity. In this sense the identity relation between Plotinus' intellectual subject and object is mediated by the subject's act and, as such, it is a weaker identity claim than that of Aristotle's; I have called it *epistemic identity*. For the identity relation between the intellectual subject and object which Aristotle postulated was such that the subject was subsumed by its object. Plotinus' unique identity relation is achieved through combining his response to

maintaining that the intellect is non-propositional. See L. Gerson, *Plotinus*, pp. 54-5. For the debate over whether the intellect is propositional or not cf. Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, p. 153 and A.C. Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 168 respectively.

⁴⁶³ cf. n 380.

Sextus' whole/whole criticism with his account of internal differentiation. In other words, it is through synthesising the whole/whole account with the need for the intellect to be a one-many that he achieves an adequate theory of self-intellection. One could state the matter as follows: By bringing together Plato, or at least his interpretation of Plato, with the one-many account which he derives from the dialogue the Parmenides,⁴⁶⁴ and Sextus' whole/whole criticism, Plotinus recasts the Aristotelian notion of self-intellection.

No doubt all of this is true. However, one might go further back. For Plotinus regards his account of the intellect and self-intellection to derive its inspiration from and, at least in part, to be a commentary on Parmenides' third fragment:

... ἐπὶ τούτου [sc. intellect] δηλονότι ἤδη ἐν ἄμφω οὐκ οἰκειώσει,
ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς ἀρίστης, ἀλλ' οὐσία καὶ τῷ ταύτῳ τὸ
εἶναι καὶ τὸ νοεῖν εἶναι. ⁴⁶⁵

For Plotinus, it is because thinking and being are the same that neither side subsumes the other in the act of self-intellection. Instead the subject has itself as an object.

But does such an identity thesis as *epistemic identity* work? Was Parmenides wrong, given his identity thesis, to collapse the epistemic subject and its object into one another rendering them unintelligible? To put it another way, has Plotinus offered us an adequate account of self-intellection? That depends on the sort of identity theorist you are. If you are a strong identity theorist and take the line that identity always entails the demise of the subject and object and that weak identity is nothing more than empty metaphor, then no, Plotinus' account does not suffice. However, if you allow for weaker theories of identity, such as *epistemic identity*, then Plotinus has established an adequate basis for a theory of self-intellection.

⁴⁶⁴ See 5.1 [10].8.26 and n. 385.

⁴⁶⁵ 3.8 [30].8.7-8. Trans: '... it is clear that in intellect both are one, not by becoming akin, as in the best soul, but *qua* substance, and because "thinking and being are the same."' See Armstrong, Enneads, vol. 3, p. 384, n. 1 and 1.4 [46].10.6 and 5.1 [10].8.17, where Plotinus quotes Parmenides accurately.

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